Bennett • Cafaro • Prianto • Peteri

WITCHBLADE®

30TH ANNIVERSARY

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16
NOV
DIGITAL EDITION
US
TOP COW UNIVERSE

WITCHBLADE®

created by **Marc Silvestri**, **David Wohl**, **Brian Haberlin** & **Michael Turner**

New York City Police Detective Sara Pezzini's life was forever fractured by her father's murder. Cold, cunning, and hellbent on revenge, Sara now stalks a vicious criminal cabal beneath the city. During a brutal warehouse massacre, Sara bonded with the Witchblade, an ancient weapon that transformed her into something wild, magnificent, and beyond her darkest imaginings.

Previously... New York City Police Detective Sara Pezzini's dive into the world of the supernatural began with the search into the cover-up that destroyed her father. Along the way, she bonded with an ancient weapon known as the Witchblade, which, following recent events, has gone through a new transformation, bound by the powers of darkness and light, becoming something new that hangs in the balance. Back at work, a series of serial murders has divided the city along social and ideological lines. Sara discovers Maralisa Búzio, or "just Lisa," whose knowledge of the occult draws her to the case and into Sara's orbit. The pair have joined forces, putting Lisa's knowledge and Sara's detective skills to work in piecing together the clues that will lead them to the killer. Meanwhile, the tension on the streets exploded when officers using military style equipment confronted a gathering of peaceful protesters, sending the crowd into a panic. From the shadows, a hooded figure confronted the police, transforming into a wicked animal that began to tear into the force with a vengeance. Sara arrived just in time to save the lives of her fellow officers, but was brutally attacked by the savage beast. Terrified, Lisa ran from the scene, leaving Sara to her fate.

"The River"

Written by **Marguerite Bennett**
Line art by **Giuseppe Cafaro**
Colors by **Arif Prianto** • Letters by **Troy Peteri**
Edits by **Marc Silvestri**, **Matt Hawkins** and **Ryan Cady**

Cover A: **Giuseppe Cafaro** and **Arif Prianto**
Cover B, D (Virgin), and Top Cow Store Spot Foil Exclusive: **Leirix**
Cover C, and E (Virgin): **Sozomaika**

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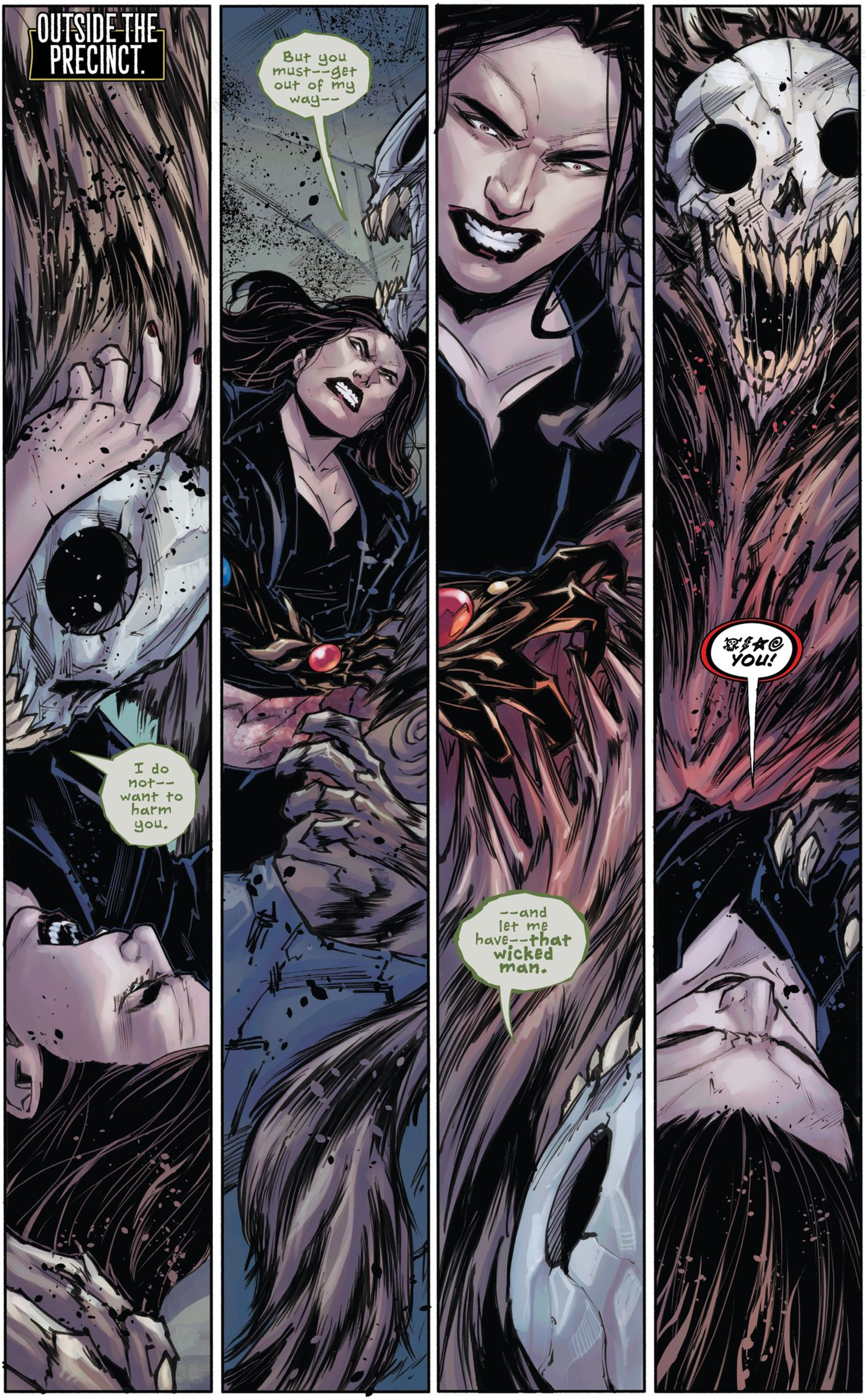
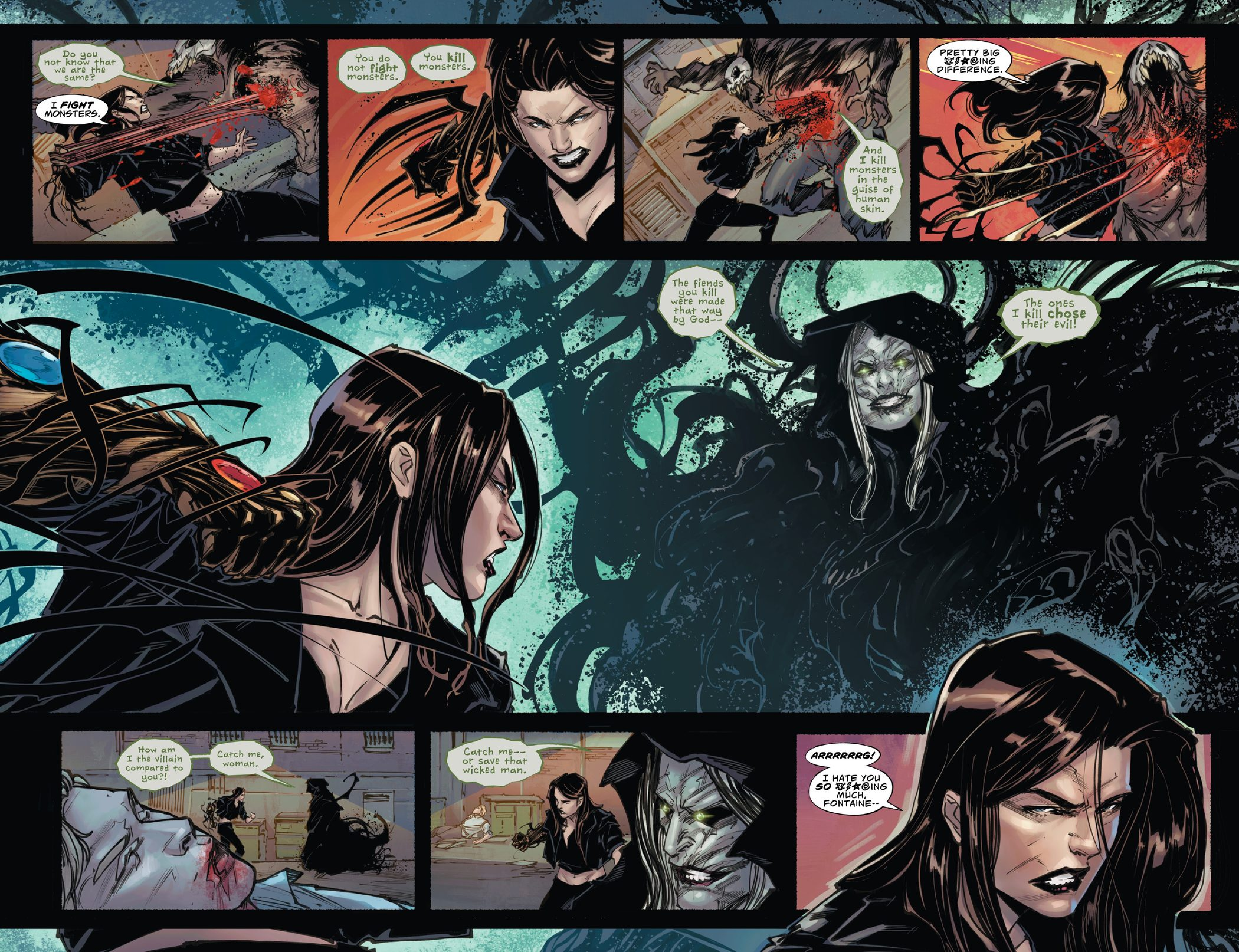
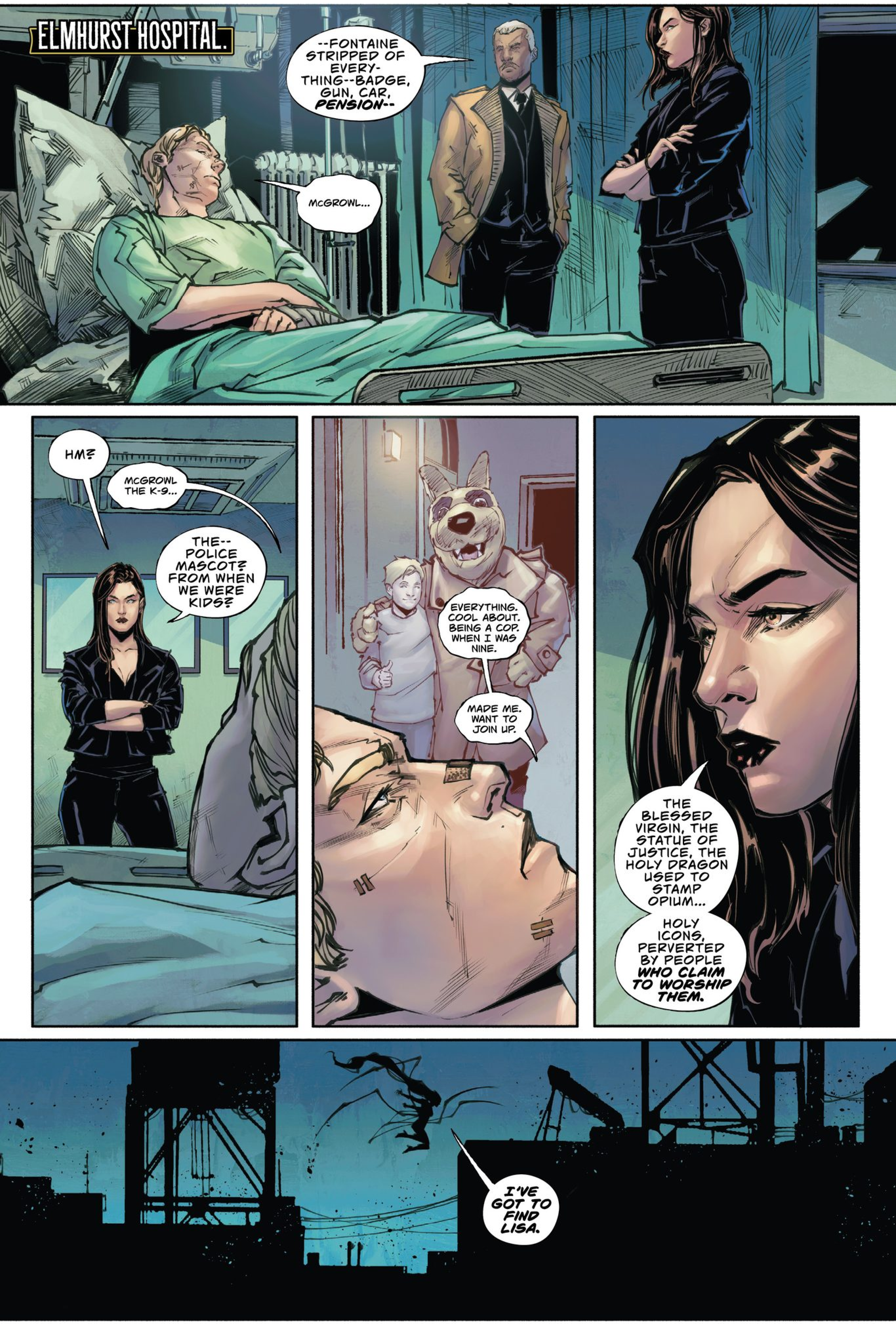
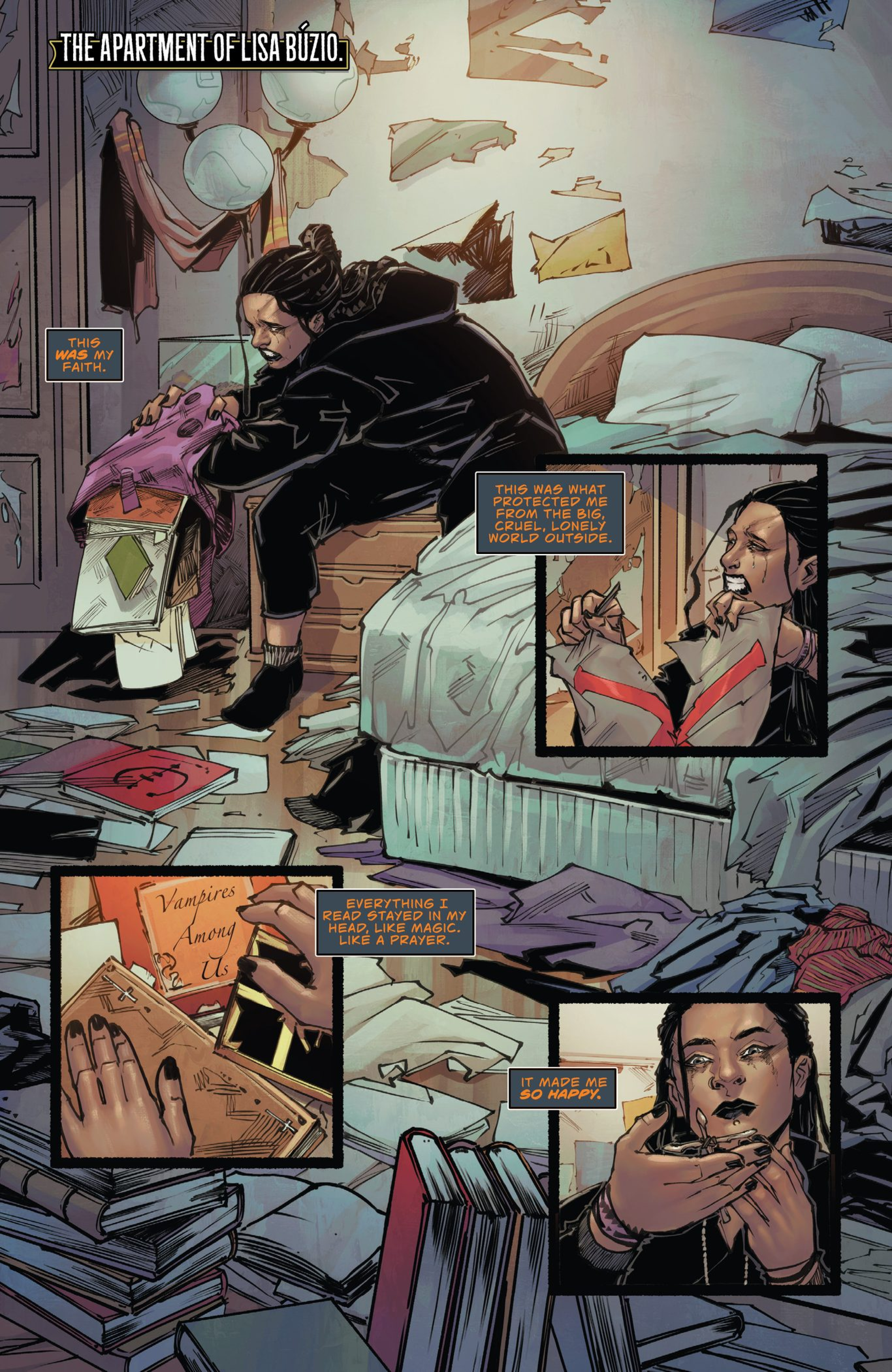
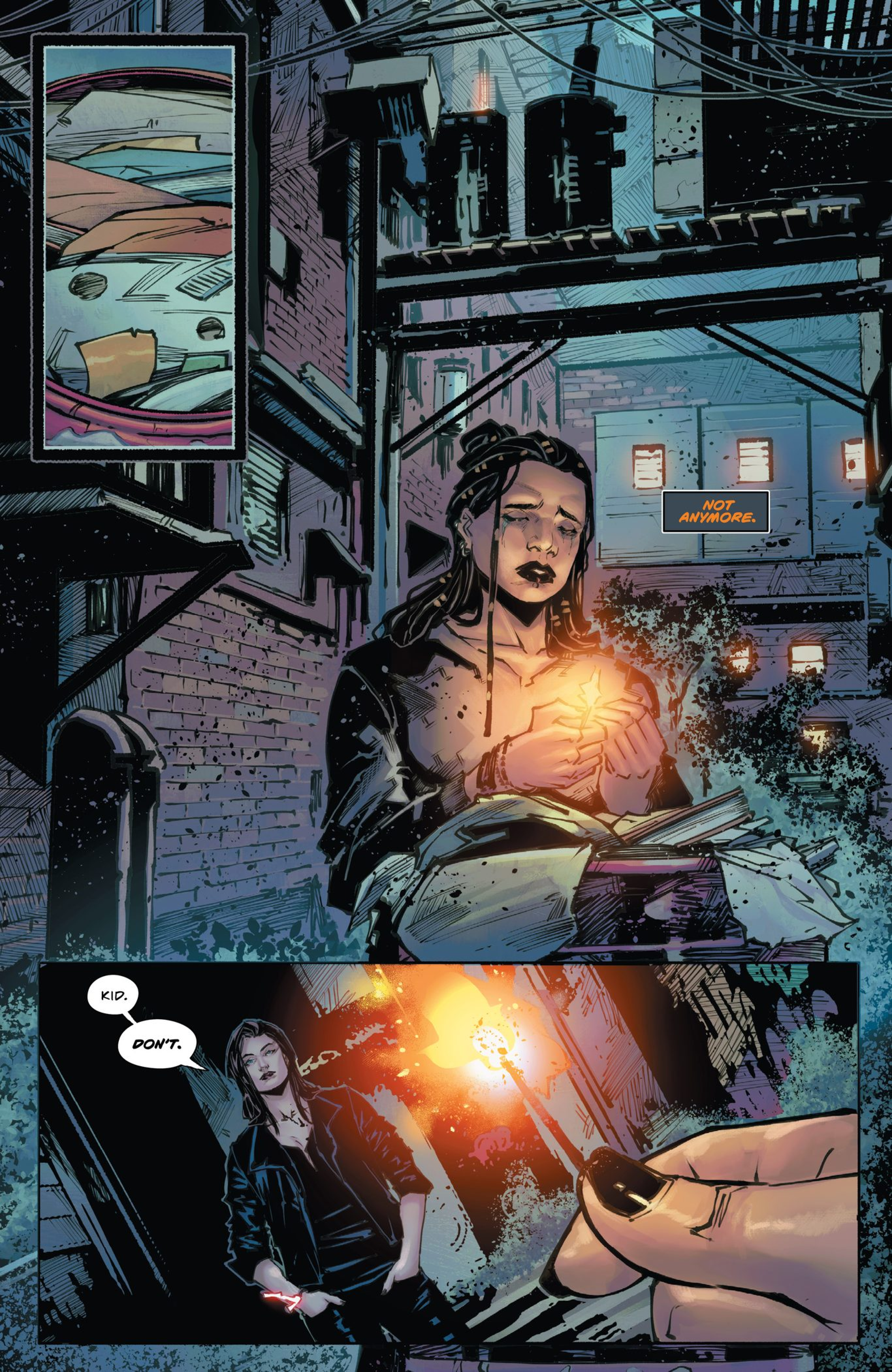
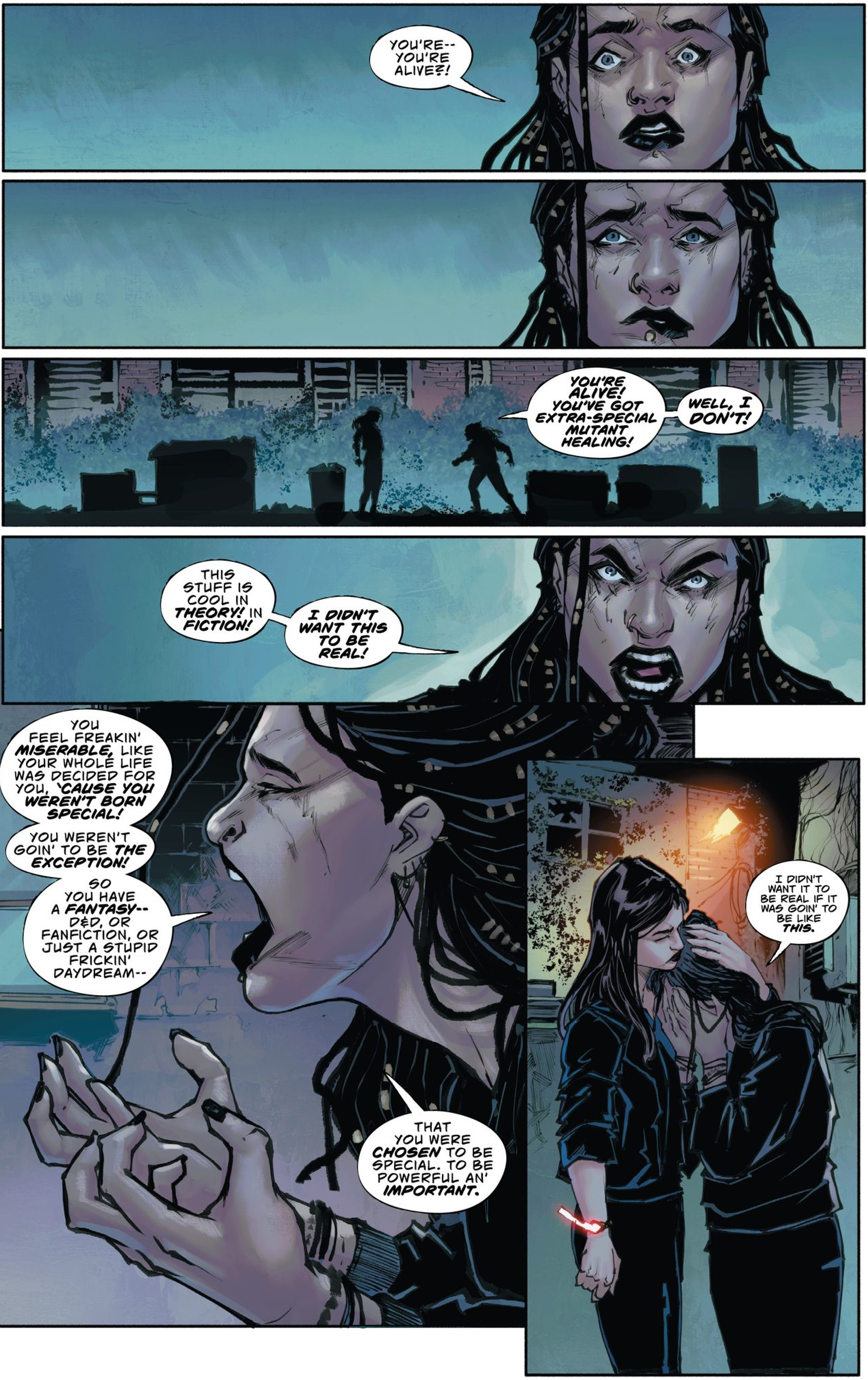

OUTSIDE THE PRECINCT.
I do not--want to harm you.
But you must--get out of my way--
--and let me have--**that wicked man.**
☠⚡★@ YOU!

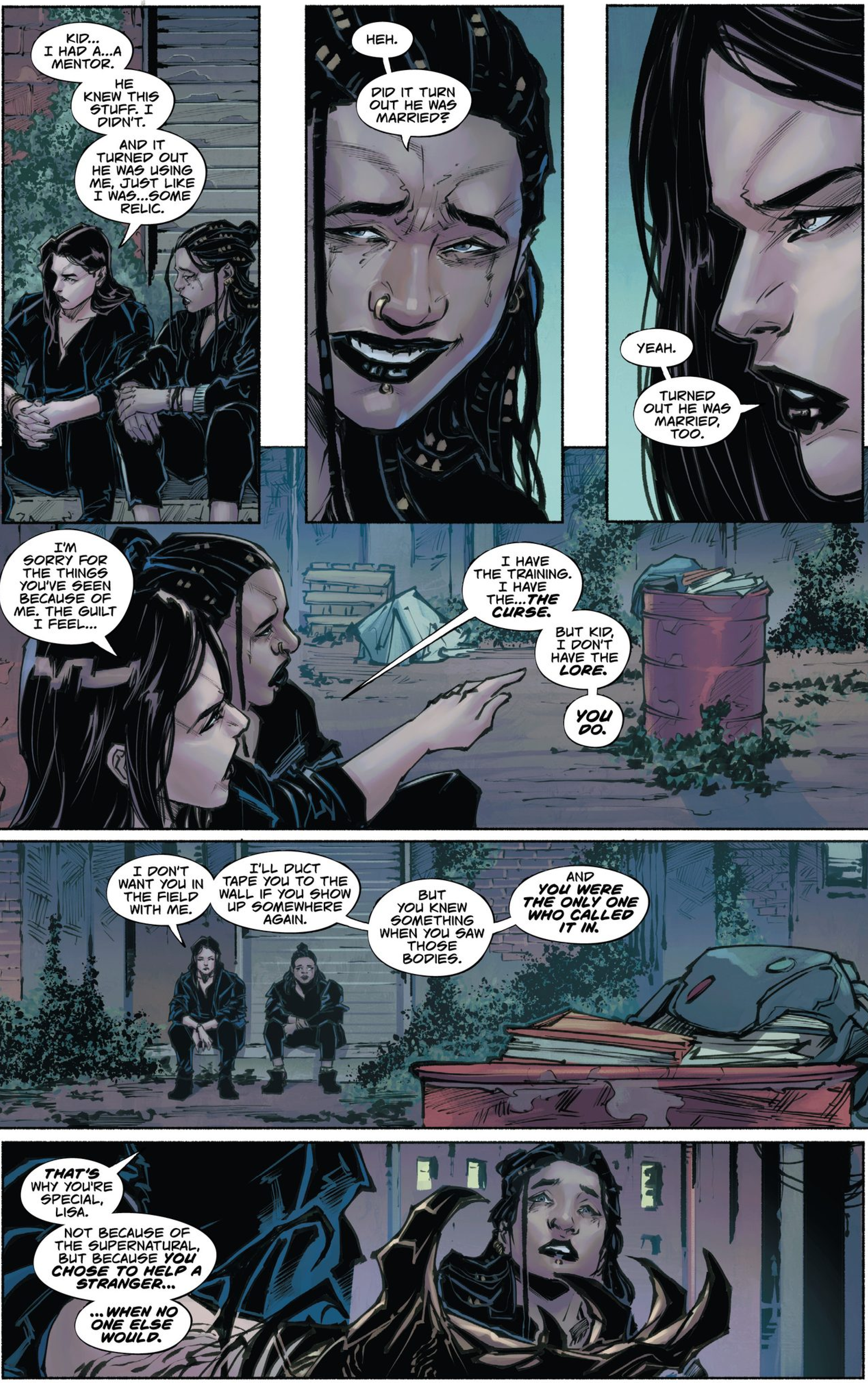

Do you not know that we are the same?
I FIGHT MONSTERS.
You do not fight monsters.
You kill monsters.
And I kill monsters in the guise of human skin.
PRETTY BIG ☠$★@ING DIFFERENCE.
The fiends you kill were made that way by God--
The ones I kill chose their evil!
How am I the villain compared to you?!
Catch me, woman.
Catch me-- or save that wicked man.
ARRRRRRG!
I HATE YOU SO ☠$★@ING MUCH, FONTAINE--

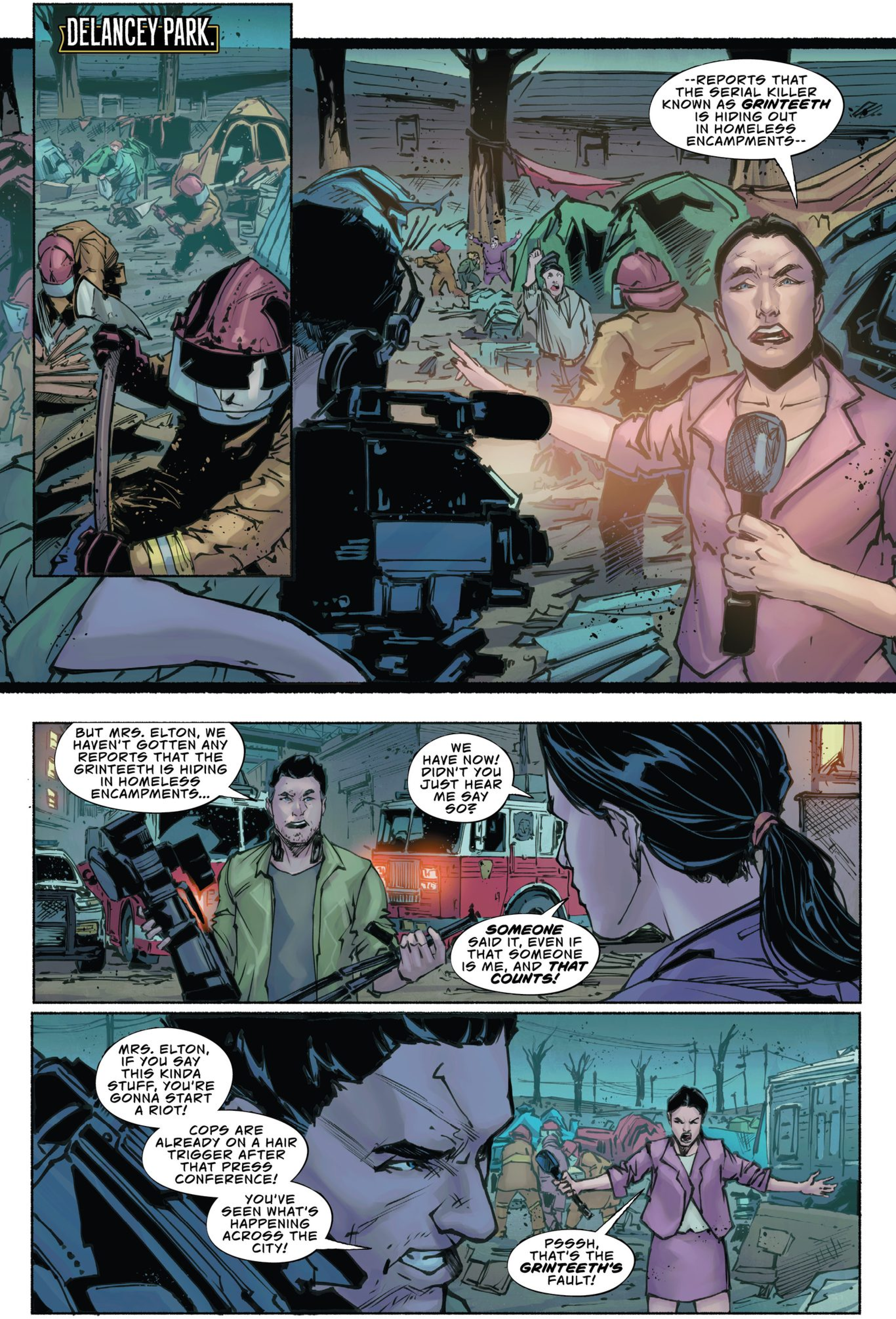

ELMHURST HOSPITAL.
--FONTAINE STRIPPED OF EVERYTHING--BADGE, GUN, CAR, ***PENSION***--
McGROWL...
HM?
McGROWL THE K-9...
THE--POLICE MASCOT? FROM WHEN WE WERE KIDS?
EVERYTHING. COOL ABOUT. BEING A COP. WHEN I WAS NINE.
MADE ME. WANT TO JOIN UP.
THE BLESSED VIRGIN, THE STATUE OF JUSTICE, THE HOLY DRAGON USED TO STAMP OPIUM...
HOLY ICONS, PERVERTED BY PEOPLE ***WHO CLAIM TO WORSHIP THEM.***
I'VE GOT TO FIND LISA.

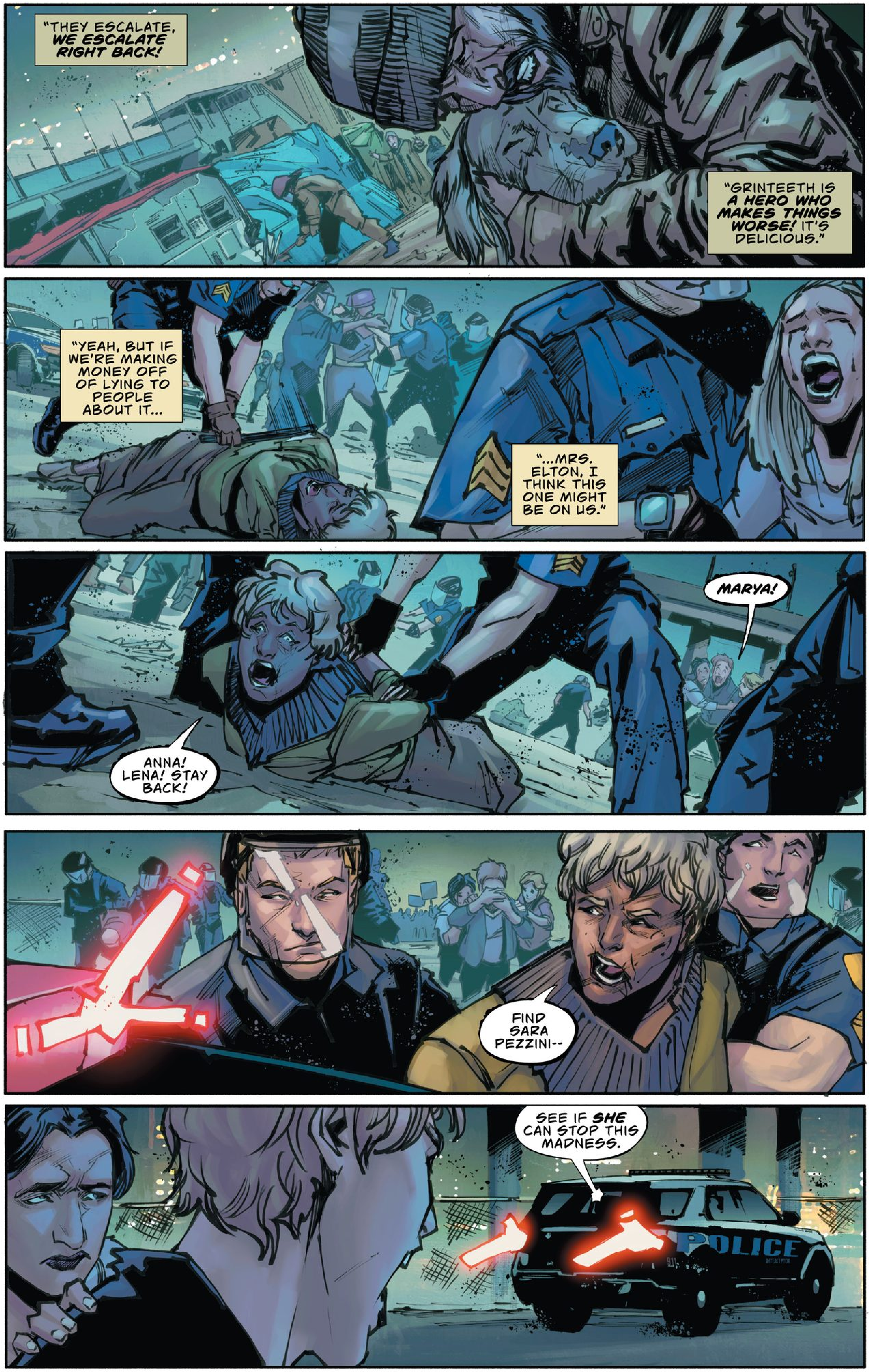

THE APARTMENT OF LISA BÚZIO.
THIS *WAS* MY FAITH.
THIS WAS WHAT PROTECTED ME FROM THE BIG, CRUEL, LONELY WORLD OUTSIDE.
Vampires Among Us
EVERYTHING I READ STAYED IN MY HEAD, LIKE MAGIC. LIKE A PRAYER.
IT MADE ME *SO HAPPY.*

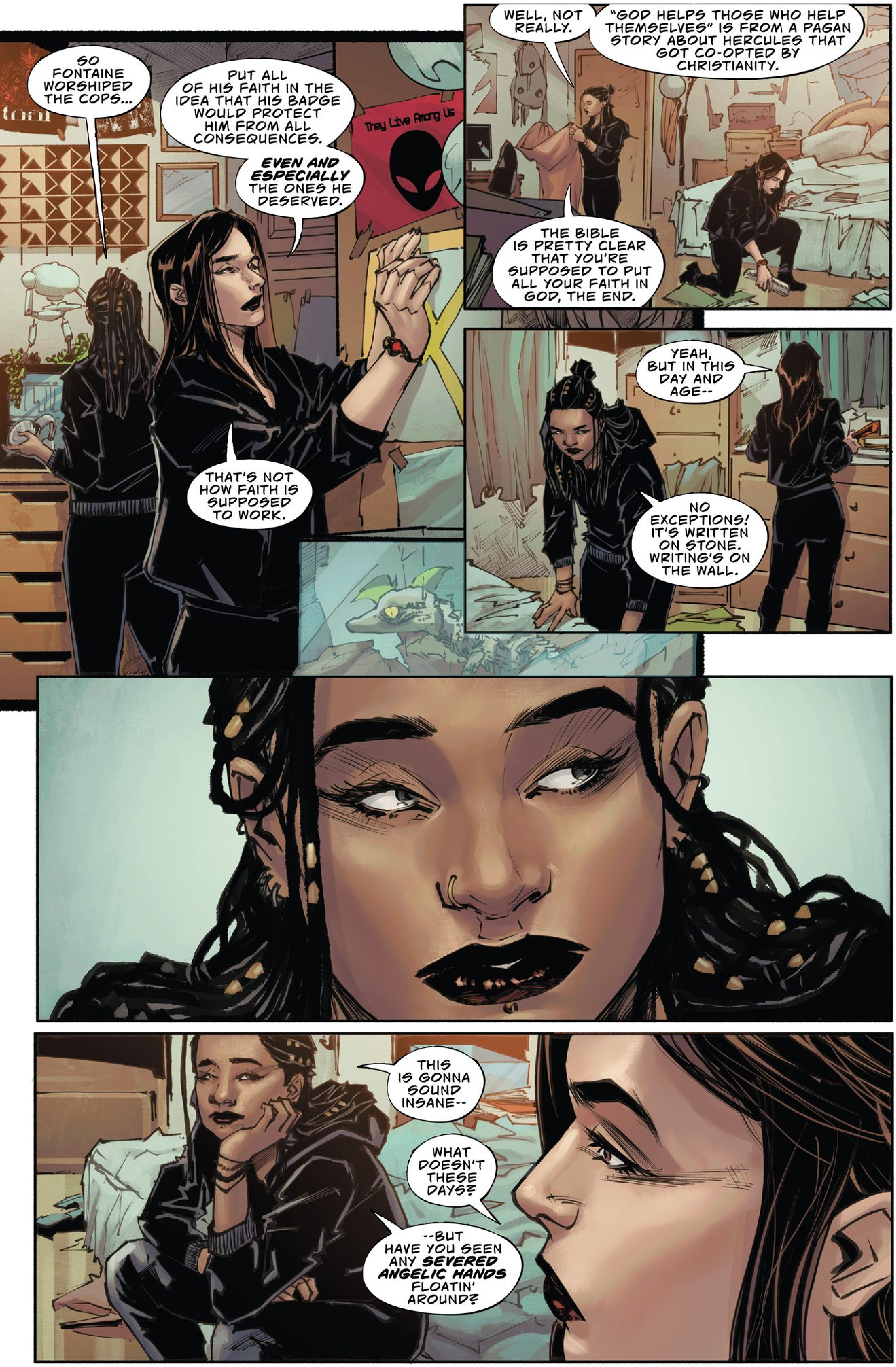

NOT ANYMORE.
KID.
DON'T.

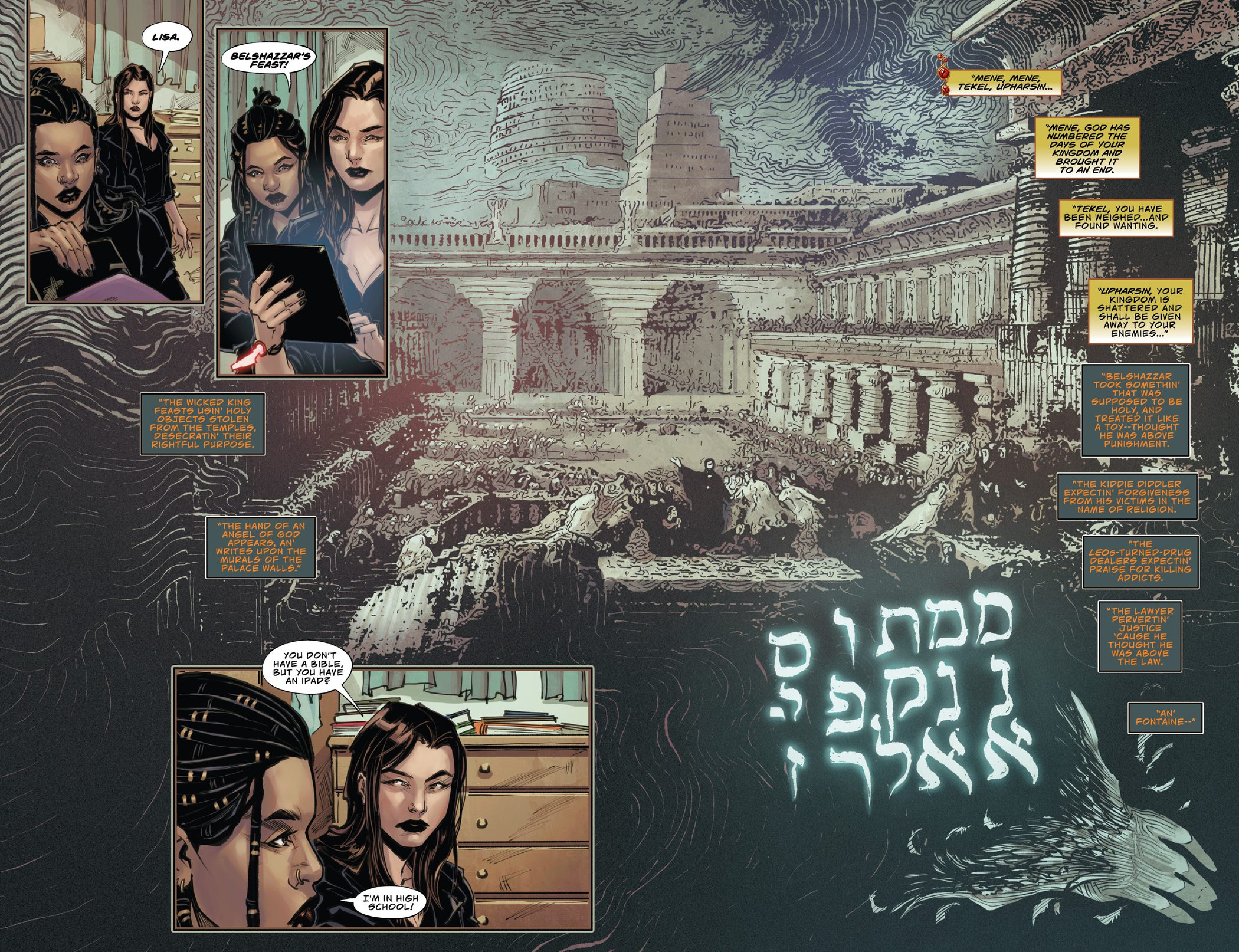

YOU'RE-- YOU'RE ALIVE?!
YOU'RE ALIVE! YOU'VE GOT EXTRA-SPECIAL MUTANT HEALING!
WELL, I DON'T!
THIS STUFF IS COOL IN THEORY! IN FICTION!
I DIDN'T WANT THIS TO BE REAL!
YOU FEEL FREAKIN' MISERABLE, LIKE YOUR WHOLE LIFE WAS DECIDED FOR YOU, 'CAUSE YOU WEREN'T BORN SPECIAL!
YOU WEREN'T GOIN' TO BE THE EXCEPTION!
SO YOU HAVE A FANTASY-- D&D, OR FANFICTION, OR JUST A STUPID FRICKIN' DAYDREAM--
THAT YOU WERE CHOSEN TO BE SPECIAL. TO BE POWERFUL AN' IMPORTANT.
I DIDN'T WANT IT TO BE REAL IF IT WAS GOIN' TO BE LIKE THIS.

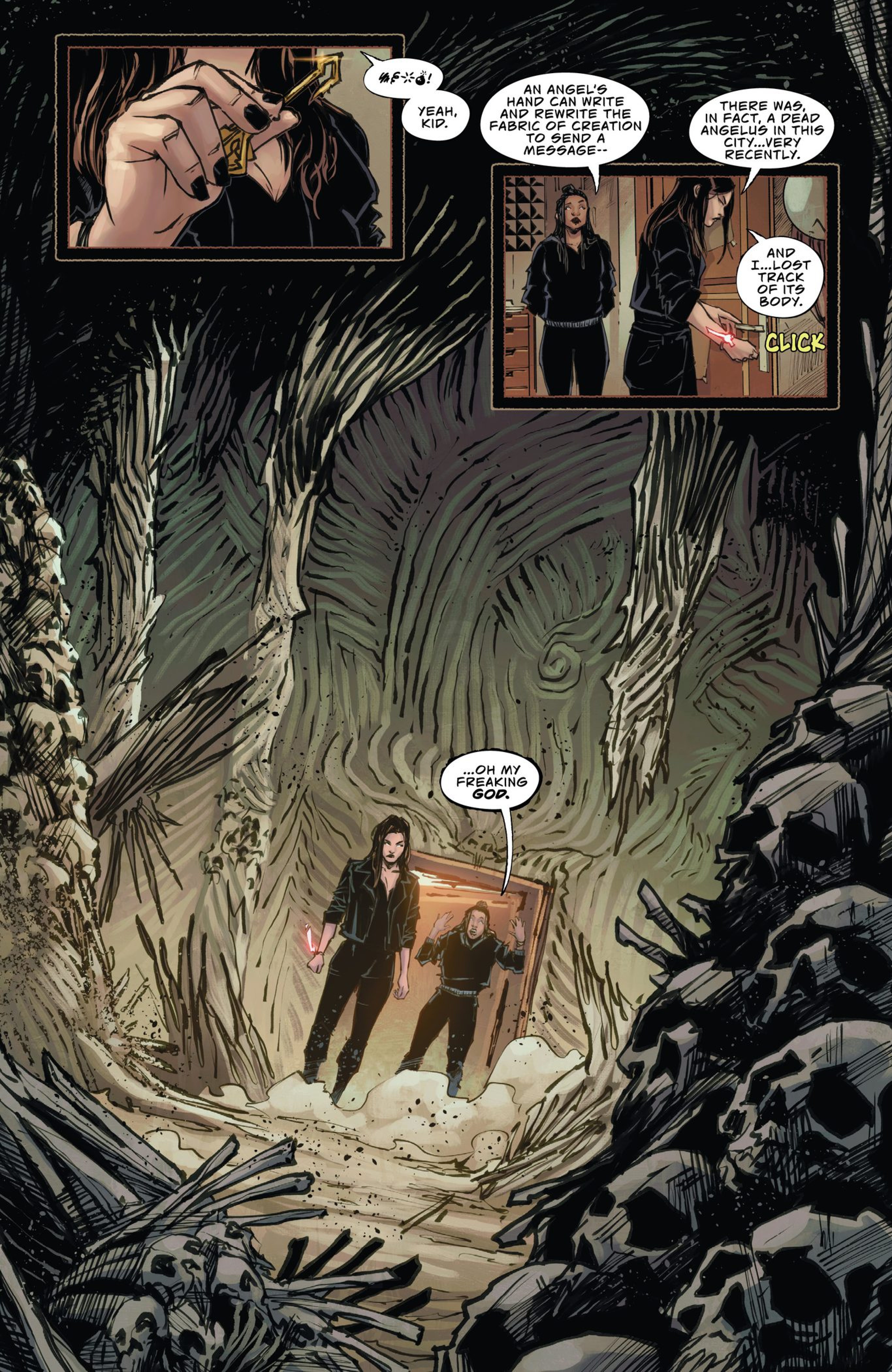

KID... I HAD A...A MENTOR.
HE KNEW THIS STUFF. I DIDN'T.
AND IT TURNED OUT HE WAS USING ME, JUST LIKE I WAS...SOME RELIC.
HEH.
DID IT TURN OUT HE WAS MARRIED?
YEAH.
TURNED OUT HE WAS MARRIED, TOO.
I'M SORRY FOR THE THINGS YOU'VE SEEN BECAUSE OF ME. THE GUILT I FEEL...
I HAVE THE TRAINING. I HAVE THE...*THE CURSE.*
BUT KID, I DON'T HAVE THE ***LORE.***
YOU DO.
I DON'T WANT YOU IN THE FIELD WITH ME.
I'LL DUCT TAPE YOU TO THE WALL IF YOU SHOW UP SOMEWHERE AGAIN.
BUT YOU KNEW SOMETHING WHEN YOU SAW THOSE BODIES.
AND ***YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE WHO CALLED IT IN.***
THAT'S WHY YOU'RE SPECIAL, LISA.
NOT BECAUSE OF THE SUPERNATURAL, BUT BECAUSE ***YOU CHOSE TO HELP A STRANGER...***
...WHEN NO ONE ELSE WOULD.

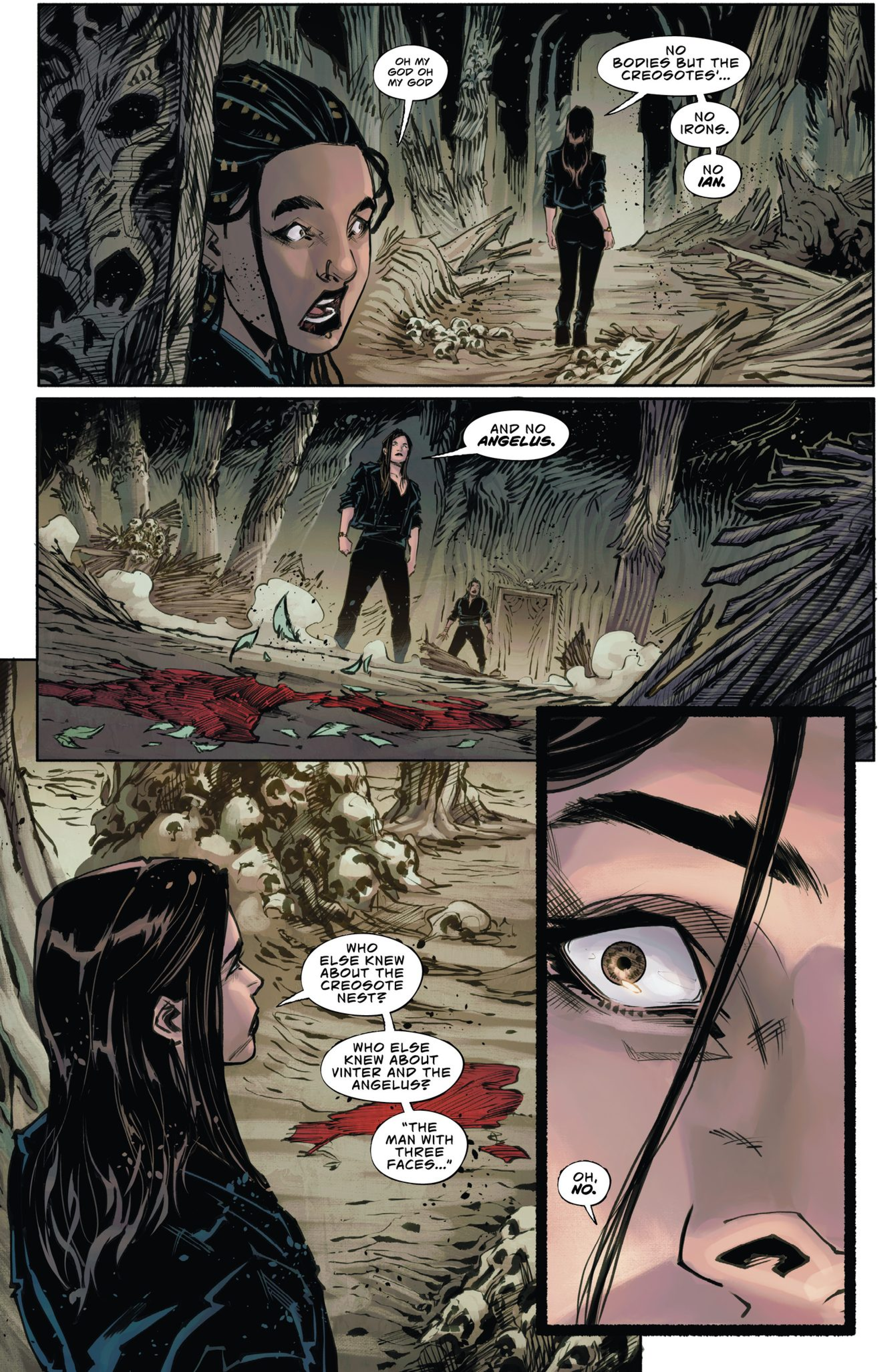

DELANCEY PARK.
--REPORTS THAT THE SERIAL KILLER KNOWN AS **GRINTEETH** IS HIDING OUT IN HOMELESS ENCAMPMENTS--
BUT MRS. ELTON, WE HAVEN'T GOTTEN ANY REPORTS THAT THE GRINTEETH IS HIDING IN HOMELESS ENCAMPMENTS...
WE HAVE NOW! DIDN'T YOU JUST HEAR ME SAY SO?
SOMEONE SAID IT, EVEN IF THAT SOMEONE IS ME, AND **THAT COUNTS!**
MRS. ELTON, IF YOU SAY THIS KINDA STUFF, YOU'RE GONNA START A RIOT!
COPS ARE ALREADY ON A HAIR TRIGGER AFTER THAT PRESS CONFERENCE!
YOU'VE SEEN WHAT'S HAPPENING ACROSS THE CITY!
PSSSH, THAT'S THE **GRINTEETH'S** FAULT!

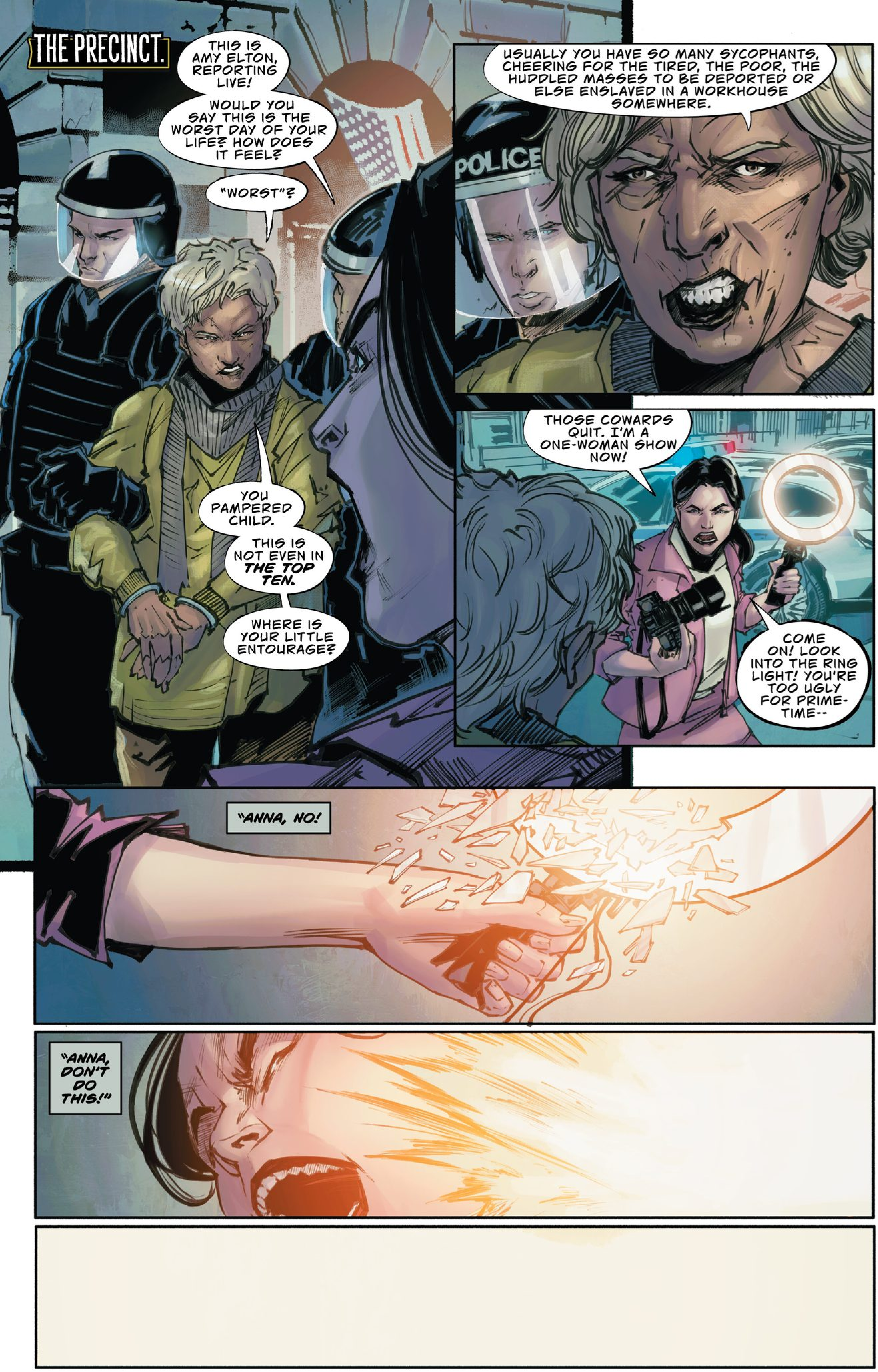

"THEY ESCALATE, ***WE ESCALATE RIGHT BACK!***
"GRINTEETH IS ***A HERO WHO MAKES THINGS WORSE!*** IT'S DELICIOUS."
"YEAH, BUT IF WE'RE MAKING MONEY OFF OF LYING TO PEOPLE ABOUT IT...
"...MRS. ELTON, I THINK THIS ONE MIGHT BE ON US."
MARYA!
ANNA! LENA! STAY BACK!
FIND SARA PEZZINI--
SEE IF ***SHE*** CAN STOP THIS MADNESS.
POLICE

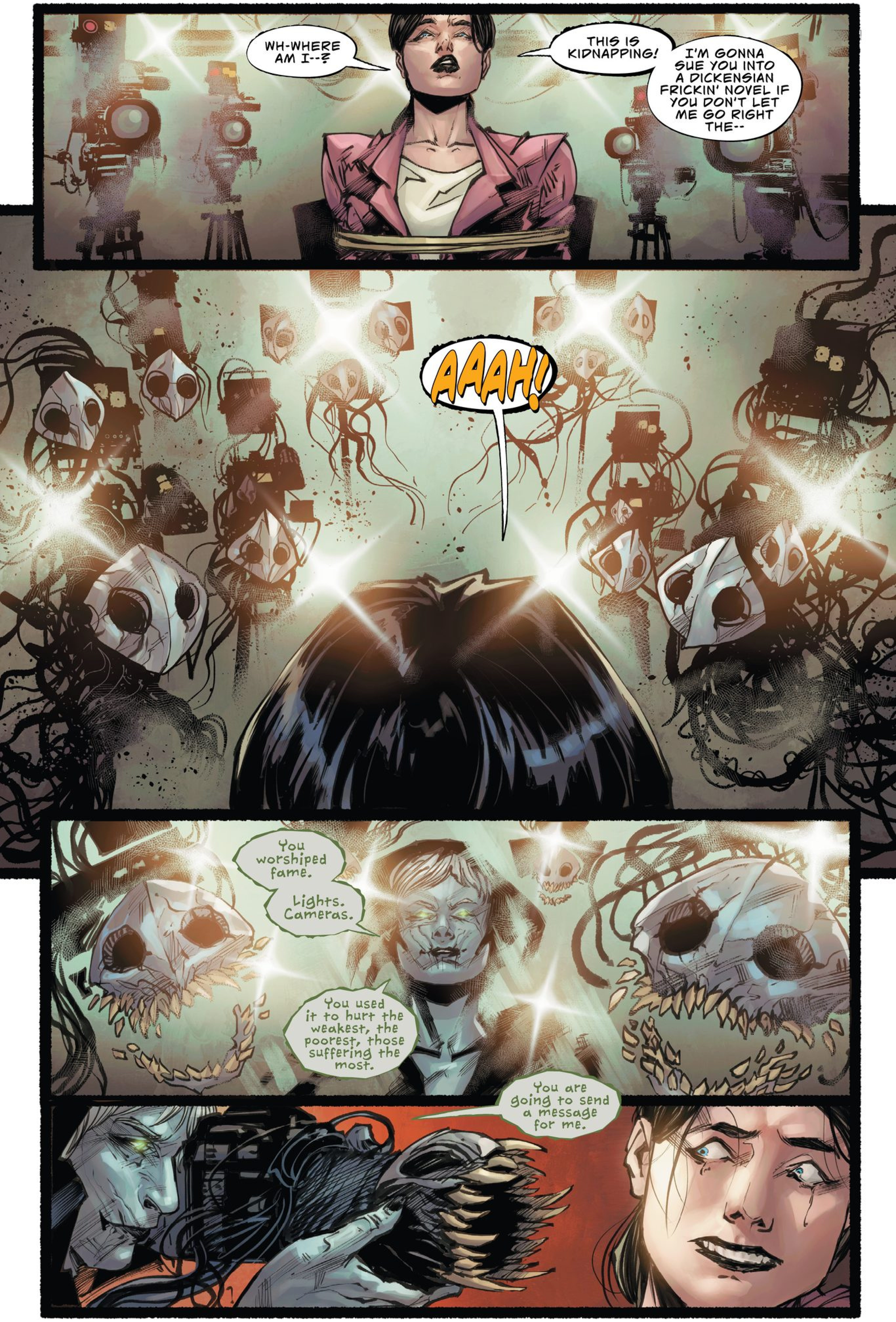

SO FONTAINE WORSHIPED THE COPS...
PUT ALL OF HIS FAITH IN THE IDEA THAT HIS BADGE WOULD PROTECT HIM FROM ALL CONSEQUENCES.
EVEN AND ESPECIALLY THE ONES HE DESERVED.
They Live Among Us
THAT'S NOT HOW FAITH IS SUPPOSED TO WORK.
WELL, NOT REALLY.
"GOD HELPS THOSE WHO HELP THEMSELVES" IS FROM A PAGAN STORY ABOUT HERCULES THAT GOT CO-OPTED BY CHRISTIANITY.
THE BIBLE IS PRETTY CLEAR THAT YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO PUT ALL YOUR FAITH IN GOD, THE END.
YEAH, BUT IN THIS DAY AND AGE--
NO EXCEPTIONS! IT'S WRITTEN ON STONE. WRITING'S ON THE WALL.
THIS IS GONNA SOUND INSANE--
WHAT DOESN'T THESE DAYS?
--BUT HAVE YOU SEEN ANY ***SEVERED ANGELIC HANDS*** FLOATIN' AROUND?

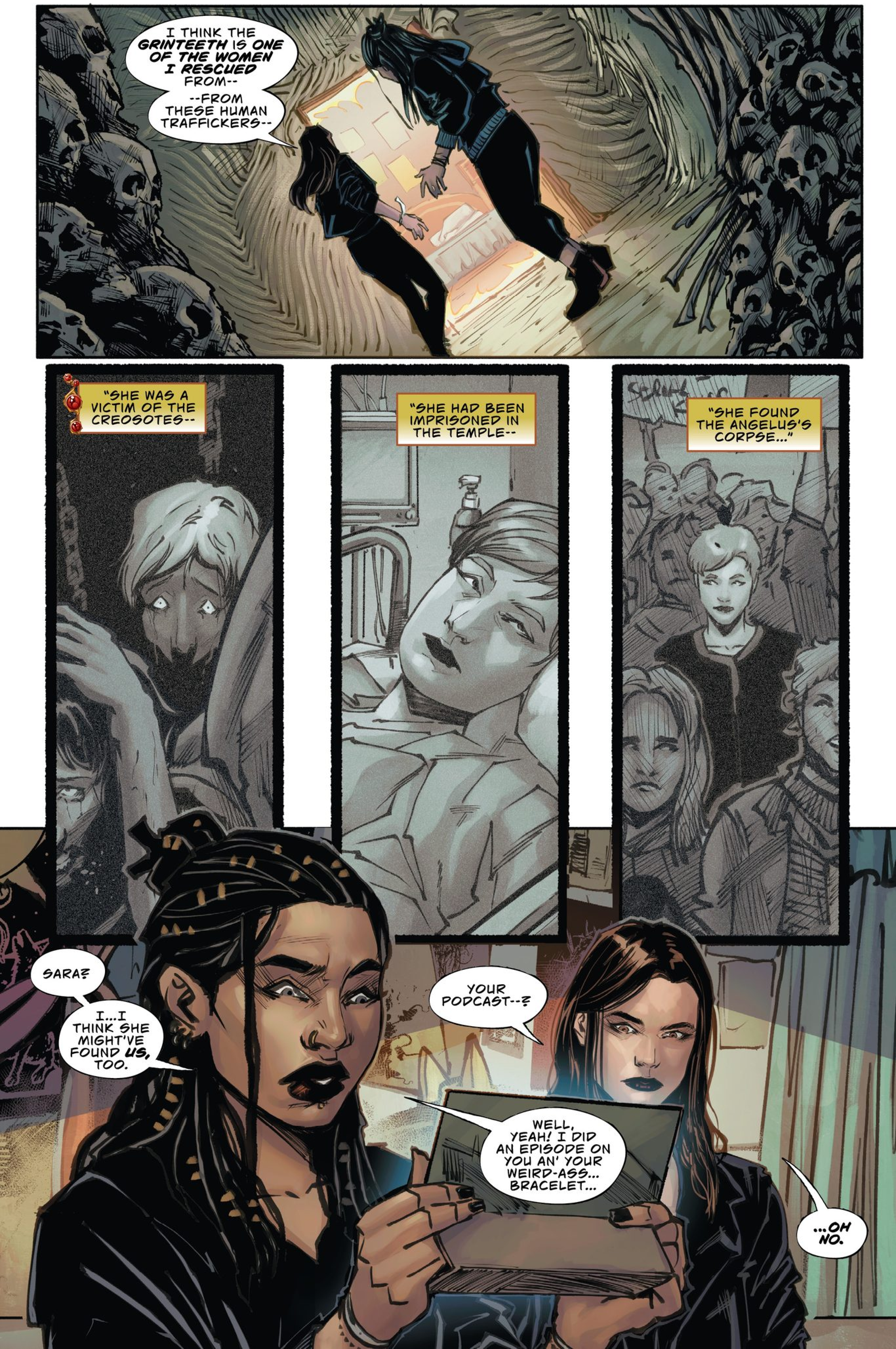

LISA.
BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST!
"THE WICKED KING FEASTS USIN' HOLY OBJECTS STOLEN FROM THE TEMPLES, DESECRATIN' THEIR RIGHTFUL PURPOSE.
"THE HAND OF AN ANGEL OF GOD APPEARS, AN' WRITES UPON THE MURALS OF THE PALACE WALLS."
YOU DON'T HAVE A BIBLE, BUT YOU HAVE AN IPAD?
I'M IN HIGH SCHOOL!
"MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN...
"MENE, GOD HAS NUMBERED THE DAYS OF YOUR KINGDOM AND BROUGHT IT TO AN END.
"TEKEL, YOU HAVE BEEN WEIGHED...AND FOUND WANTING.
"UPHARSIN, YOUR KINGDOM IS SHATTERED AND SHALL BE GIVEN AWAY TO YOUR ENEMIES..."
"BELSHAZZAR TOOK SOMETHIN' THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE HOLY, AND TREATED IT LIKE A TOY--THOUGHT HE WAS ABOVE PUNISHMENT.
"THE KIDDIE DIDDLER EXPECTIN' FORGIVENESS FROM HIS VICTIMS IN THE NAME OF RELIGION.
"THE LEOS-TURNED-DRUG DEALERS EXPECTIN' PRAISE FOR KILLING ADDICTS.
"THE LAWYER PERVERTIN' JUSTICE 'CAUSE HE THOUGHT HE WAS ABOVE THE LAW.
"AN' FONTAINE--"
סותממ
יפקננ
ןרלאא

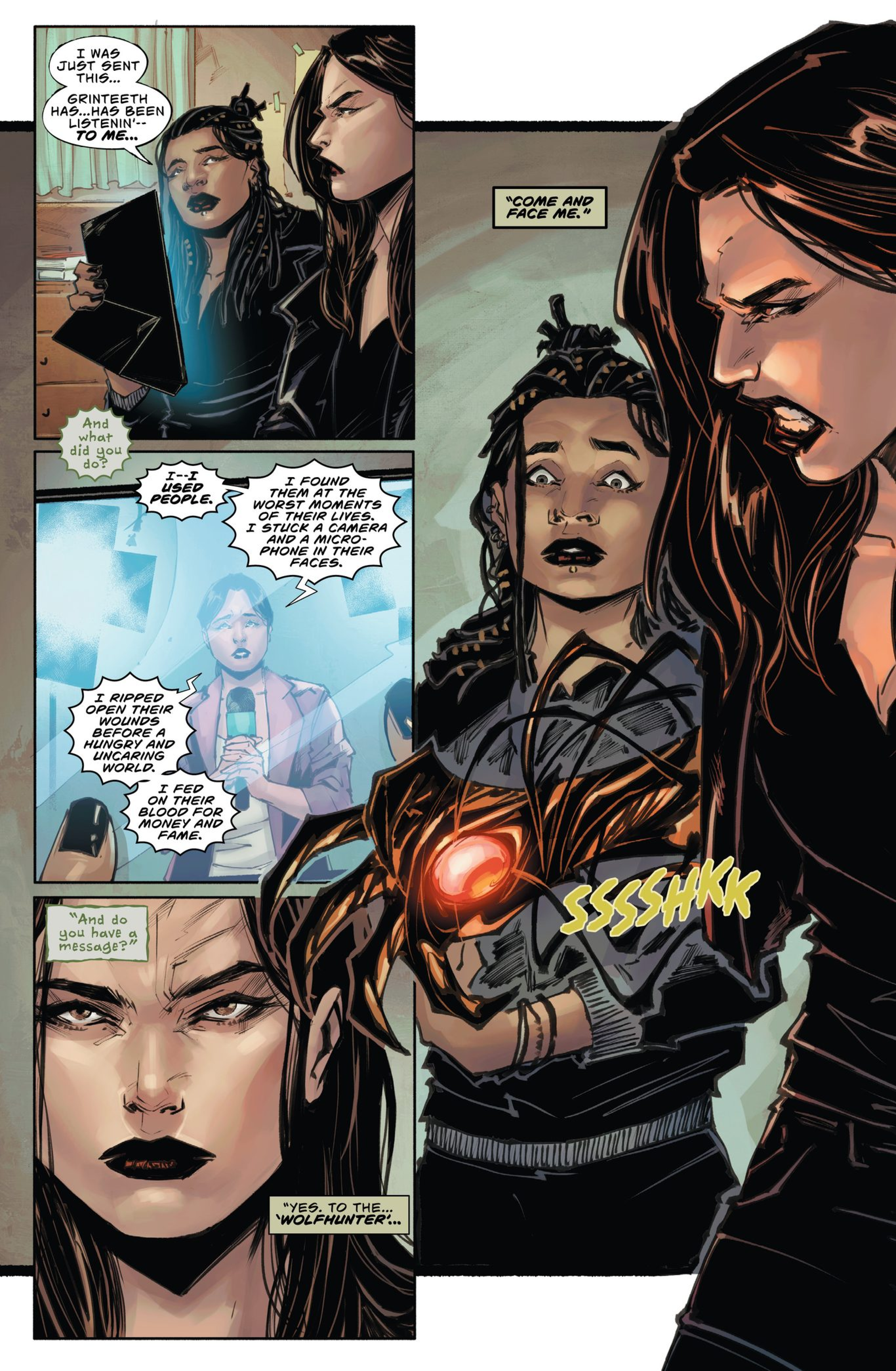

#$✳💣!
YEAH, KID.
AN ANGEL'S HAND CAN WRITE AND REWRITE THE FABRIC OF CREATION TO SEND A MESSAGE--
THERE WAS, IN FACT, A DEAD ANGELUS IN THIS CITY...VERY RECENTLY.
AND I...LOST TRACK OF ITS BODY.
CLICK
...OH MY FREAKING **GOD.**

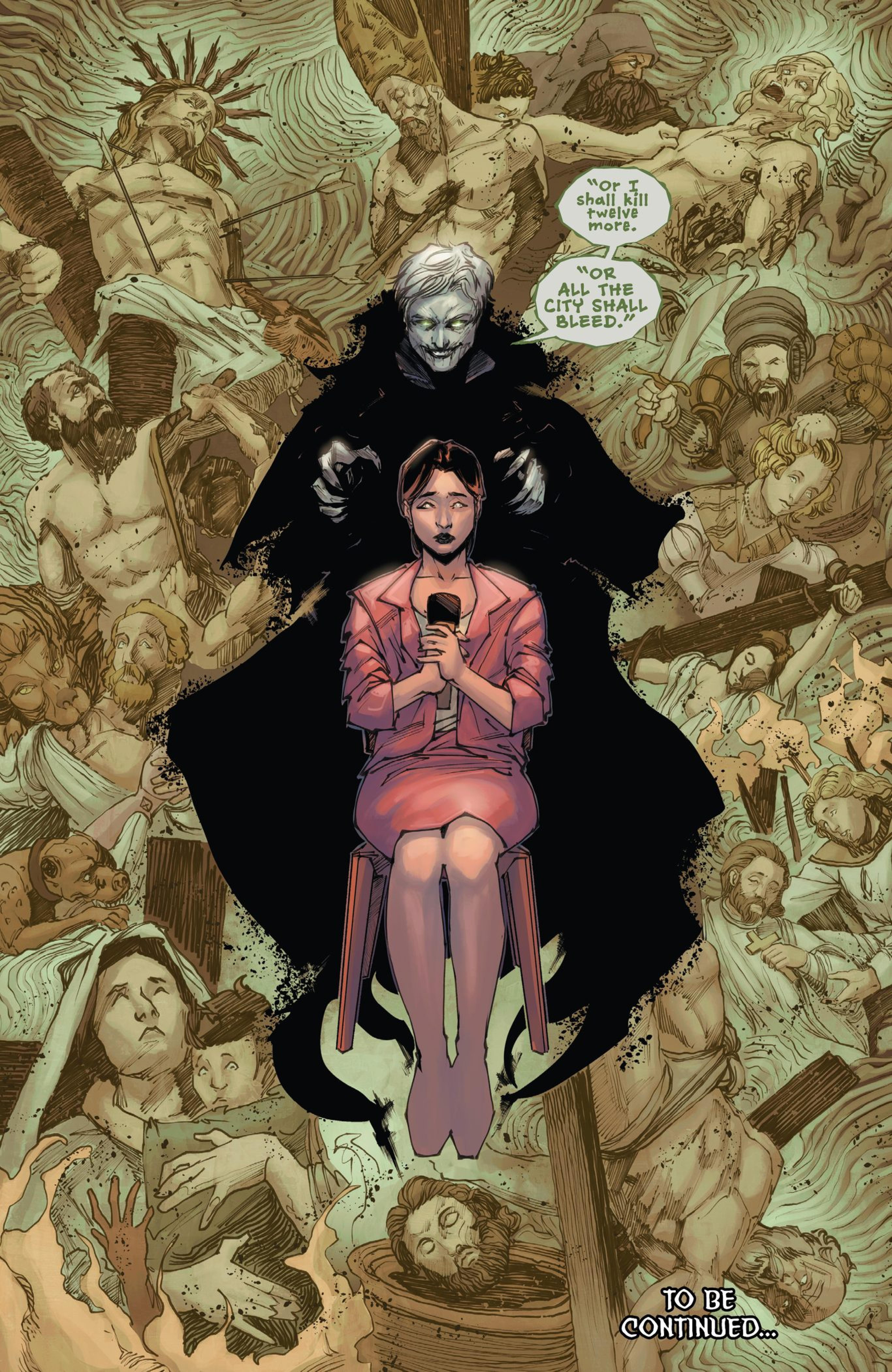

OH MY GOD OH MY GOD
NO BODIES BUT THE CREOSOTES'...
NO IRONS.
NO *IAN.*
AND NO *ANGELUS.*
WHO ELSE KNEW ABOUT THE CREOSOTE NEST?
WHO ELSE KNEW ABOUT VINTER AND THE ANGELUS?
"THE MAN WITH THREE FACES..."
OH, *NO.*


THE PRECINCT.
THIS IS AMY ELTON, REPORTING LIVE!
WOULD YOU SAY THIS IS THE WORST DAY OF YOUR LIFE? HOW DOES IT FEEL?
"WORST"?
YOU PAMPERED CHILD.
THIS IS NOT EVEN IN *THE TOP TEN.*
WHERE IS YOUR LITTLE ENTOURAGE?
USUALLY YOU HAVE SO MANY SYCOPHANTS, CHEERING FOR THE TIRED, THE POOR, THE HUDDLED MASSES TO BE DEPORTED OR ELSE ENSLAVED IN A WORKHOUSE SOMEWHERE.
POLICE
THOSE COWARDS QUIT. I'M A ONE-WOMAN SHOW NOW!
COME ON! LOOK INTO THE RING LIGHT! YOU'RE TOO UGLY FOR PRIME-TIME--
"ANNA, NO!
"ANNA, DON'T DO THIS!"


WH-WHERE AM I--?
THIS IS KIDNAPPING!
I'M GONNA SUE YOU INTO A DICKENSIAN FRICKIN' NOVEL IF YOU DON'T LET ME GO RIGHT THE--
AAAH!
You worshiped fame.
Lights. Cameras.
You used it to hurt the weakest, the poorest, those suffering the most.
You are going to send a message for me.

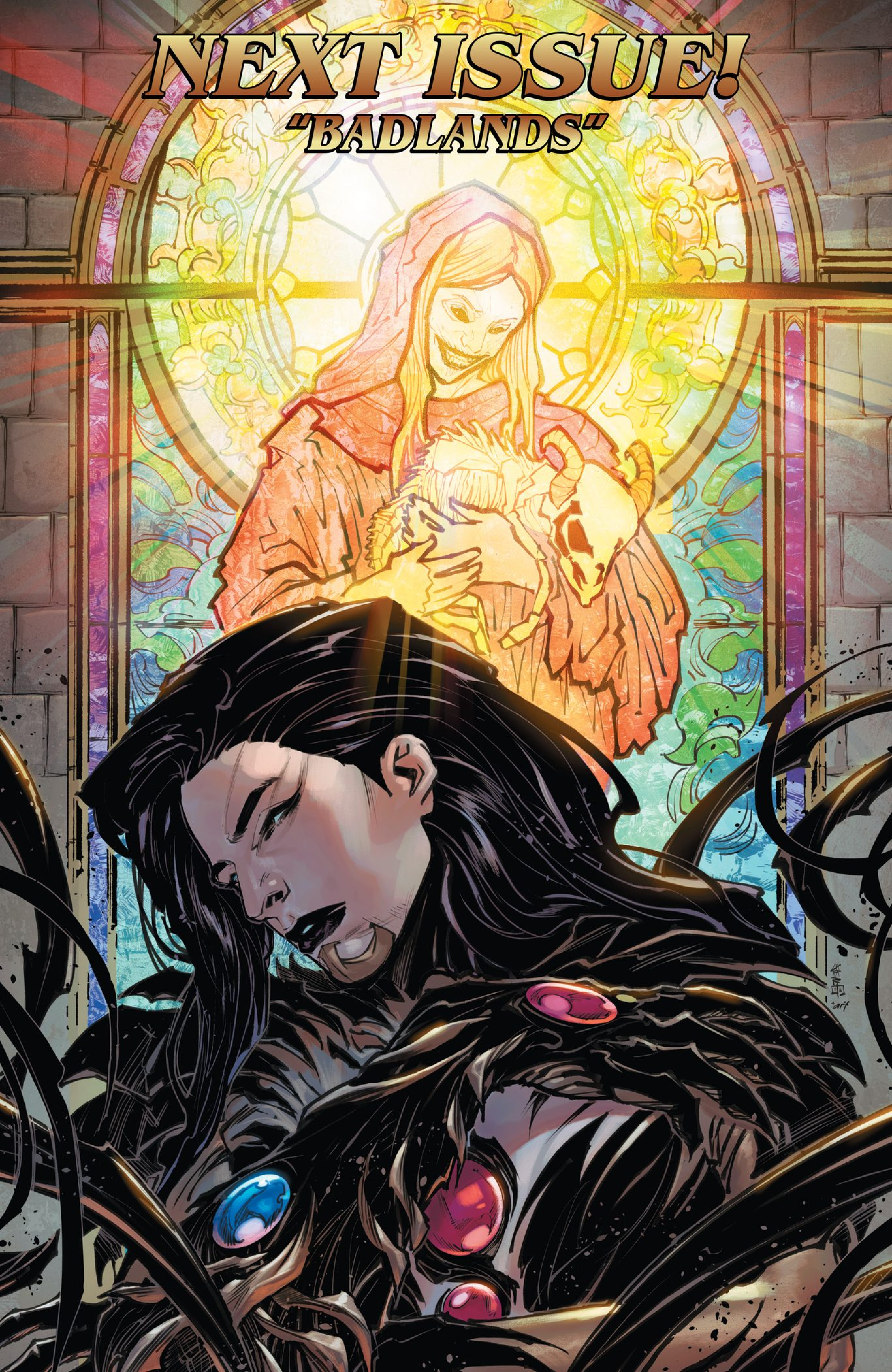

I THINK THE *GRINTEETH* IS *ONE OF THE WOMEN I RESCUED* FROM--
--FROM THESE HUMAN TRAFFICKERS--
"SHE WAS A VICTIM OF THE CREOSOTES--
"SHE HAD BEEN IMPRISONED IN THE TEMPLE--
"SHE FOUND THE ANGELUS'S CORPSE..."
SARA?
I...I THINK SHE MIGHT'VE FOUND *US,* TOO.
YOUR PODCAST--?
WELL, YEAH! I DID AN EPISODE ON YOU AN' YOUR WEIRD-ASS... BRACELET...
...OH NO.


I WAS JUST SENT THIS...
GRINTEETH HAS...HAS BEEN LISTENIN'-- TO ME...
And what did you do?
I--I USED PEOPLE.
I FOUND THEM AT THE WORST MOMENTS OF THEIR LIVES. I STUCK A CAMERA AND A MICROPHONE IN THEIR FACES.
I RIPPED OPEN THEIR WOUNDS BEFORE A HUNGRY AND UNCARING WORLD.
I FED ON THEIR BLOOD FOR MONEY AND FAME.
"And do you have a message?"
"YES. TO THE... 'WOLFHUNTER'...
"COME AND FACE ME."
SSSSHKK

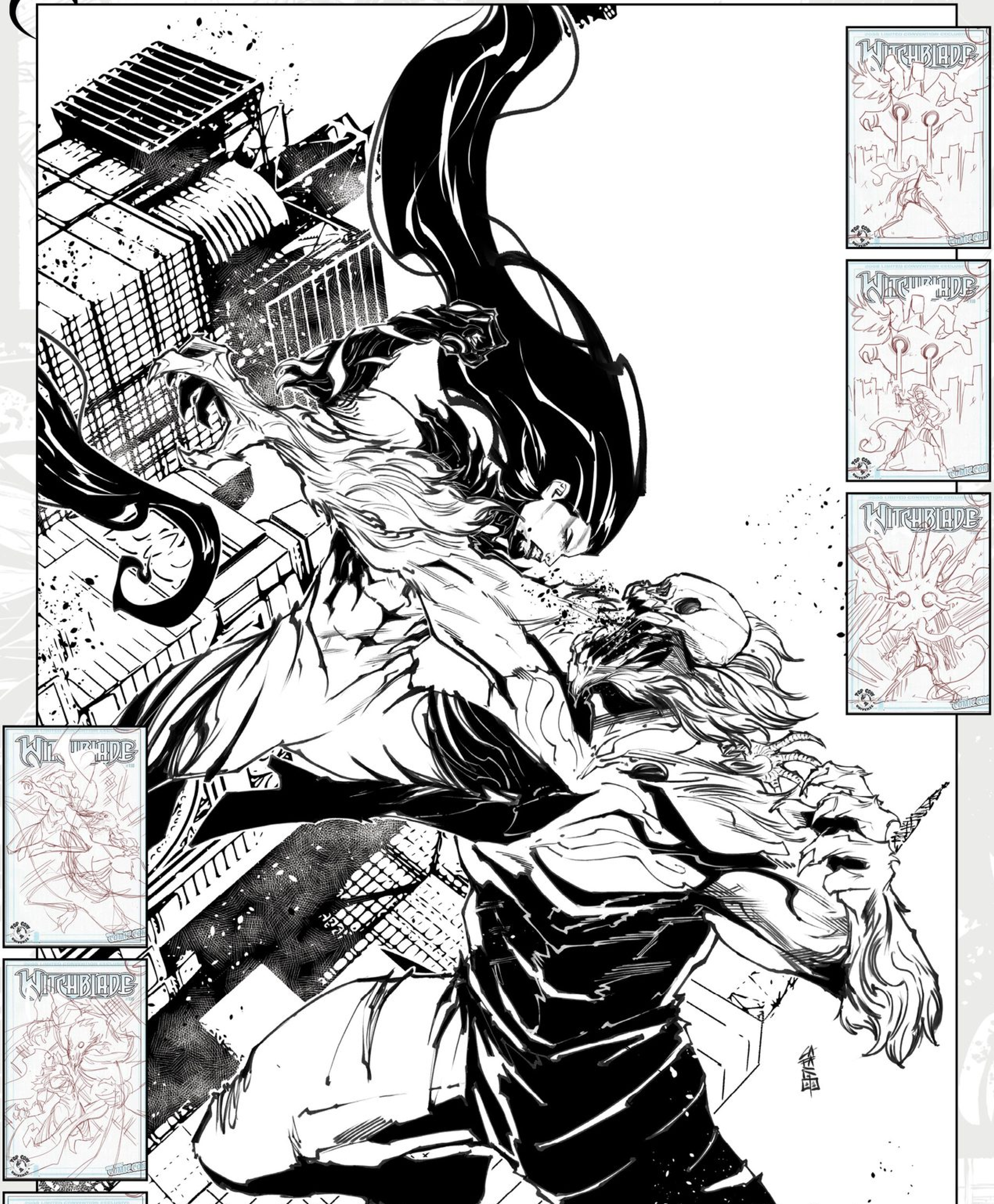

"Or I shall kill twelve more.
"OR ALL THE CITY SHALL BLEED."
TO BE CONTINUED...

NEXT ISSUE!

"BADLANDS"



WITCHBLADE #16 Gallery • Cover A Process


WITCHBLADE
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WITCHBLADE
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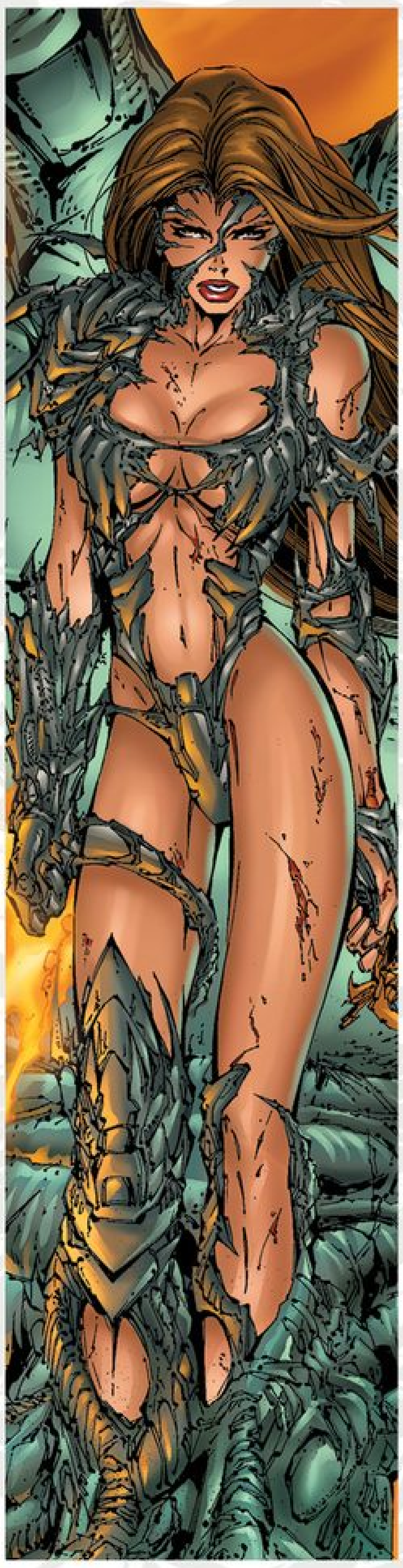
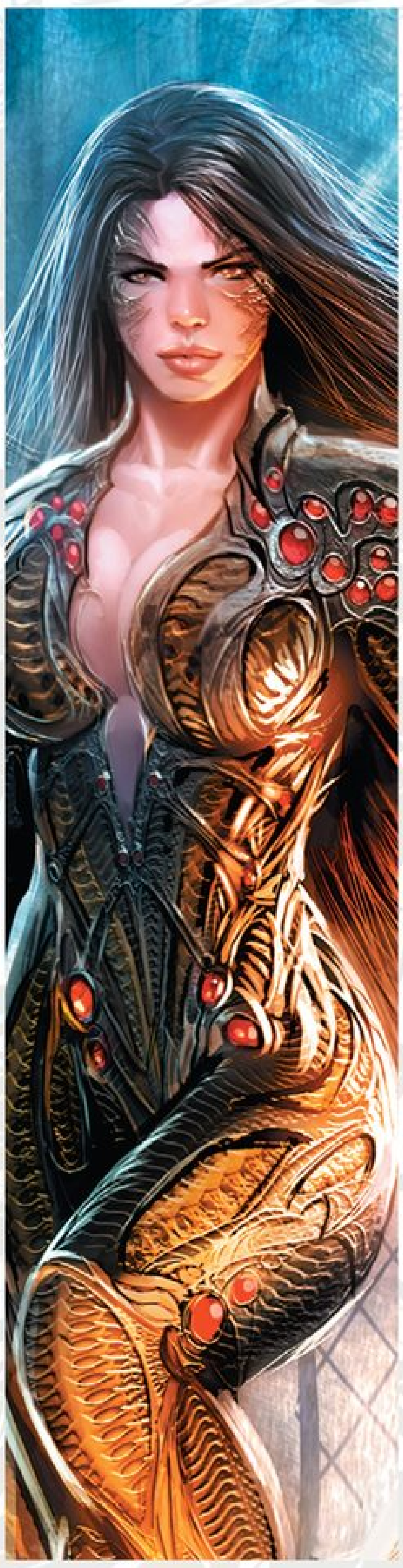
Witchblade #16, Cover A, process from thumbnail, line art to colors
Art by **Giuseppe Cafaro** and **Arif Prianto**

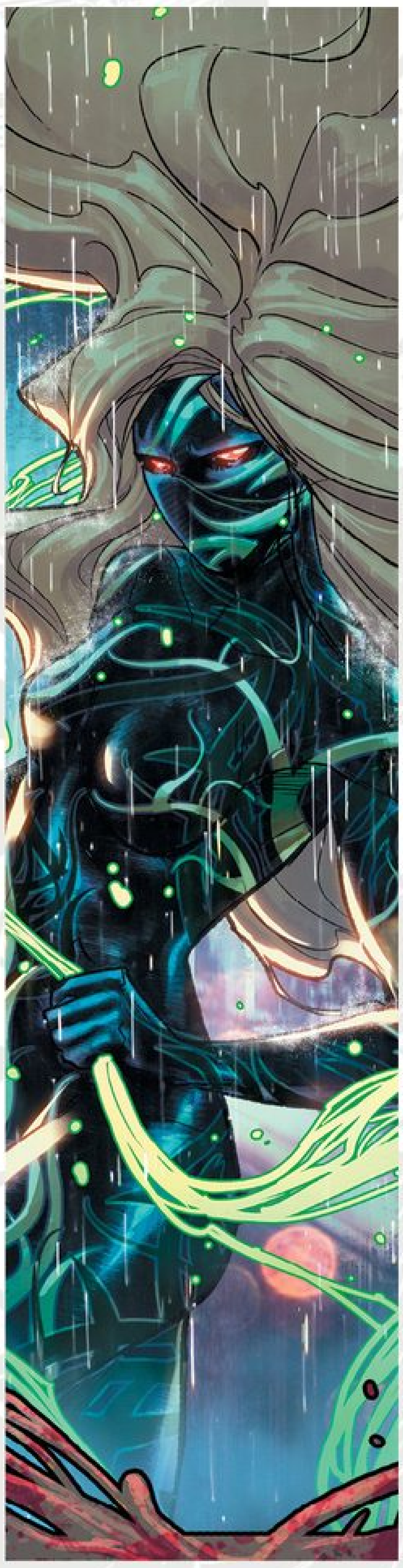
+arif

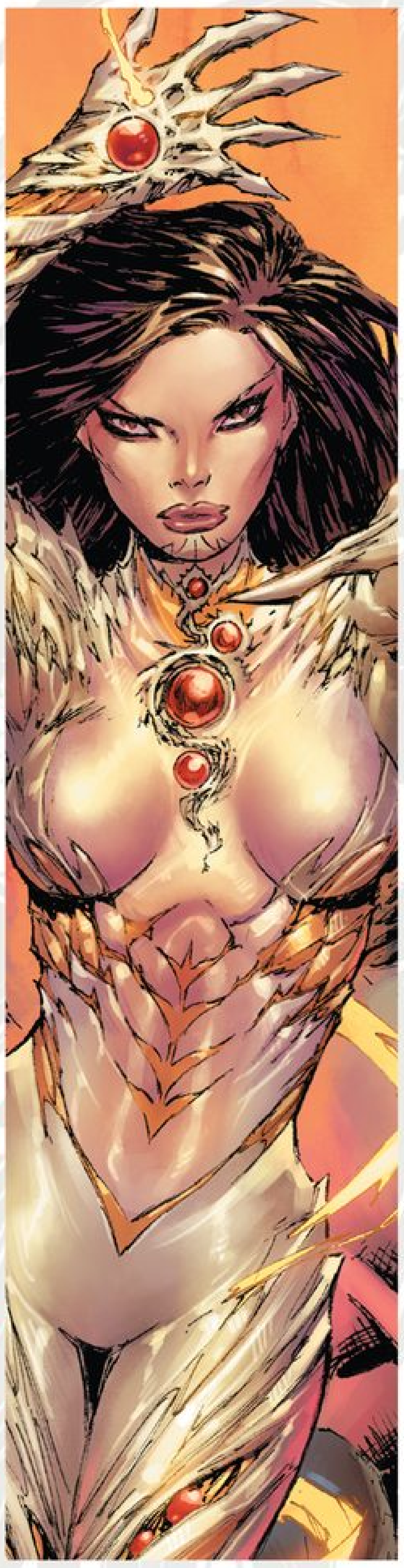
WITCHBLADE® #16 Gallery • Cover B Process

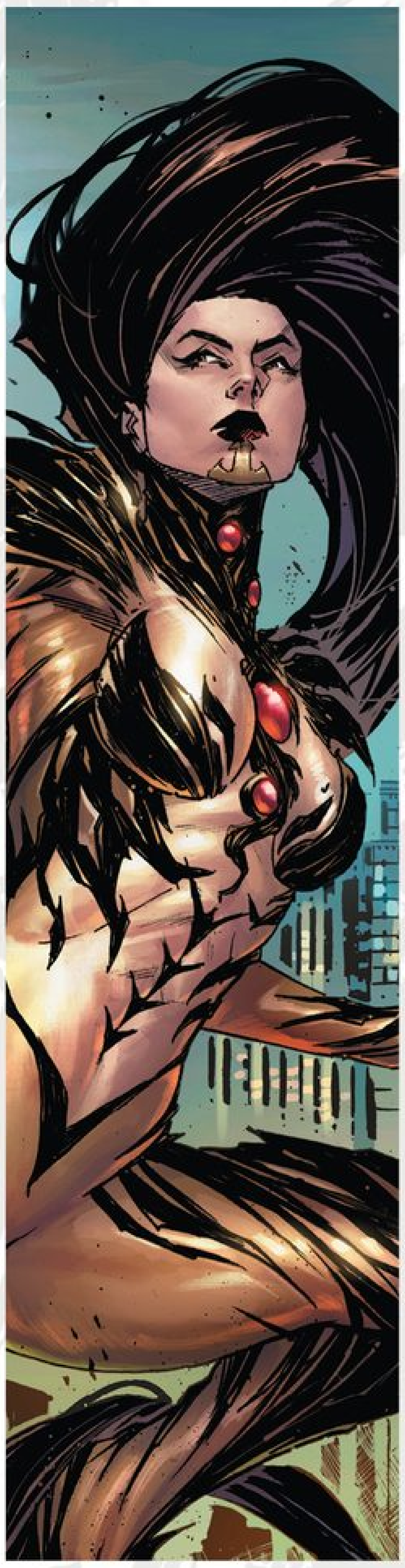
This month's variants take their inspiration from the rich legacy of *Witchblade*. Leirix's cover highlights the major turning points in the design of the Witchblade armor.

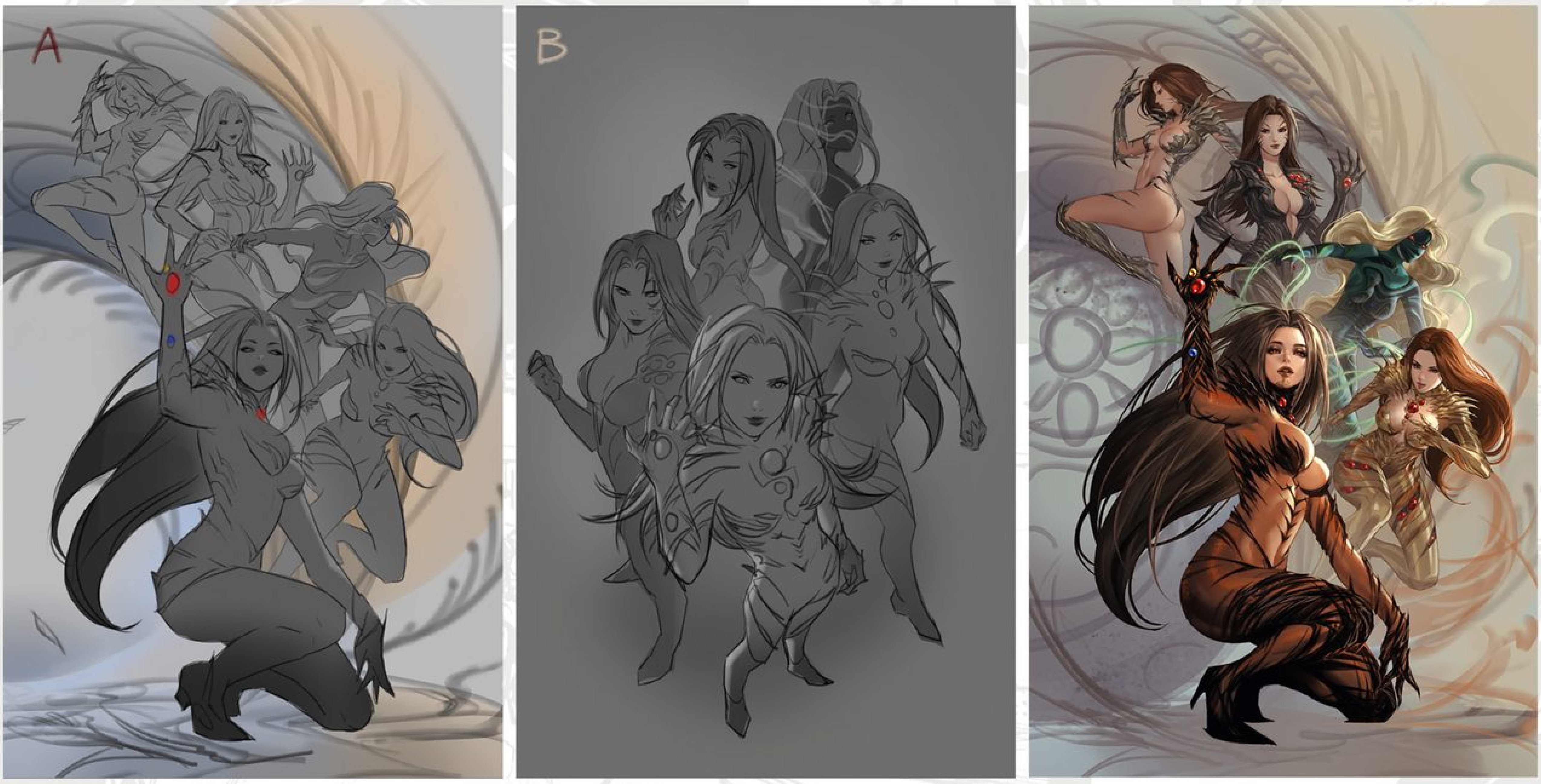

c1995
Original "Legacy" era
Art by: **Michael Turner**, **D-Tron**, and **J.D. Smith**


c2008
"Legacy" era,
post "First Born"
Art by: **Stjepan Sejic**


c2017
"Alex Underwood" era
Art by: **Roberta Ingranata** and **Bryan Valenza**


c2024
Modern era
Art by: **Marc Silvestri** and **Arif Prianto**

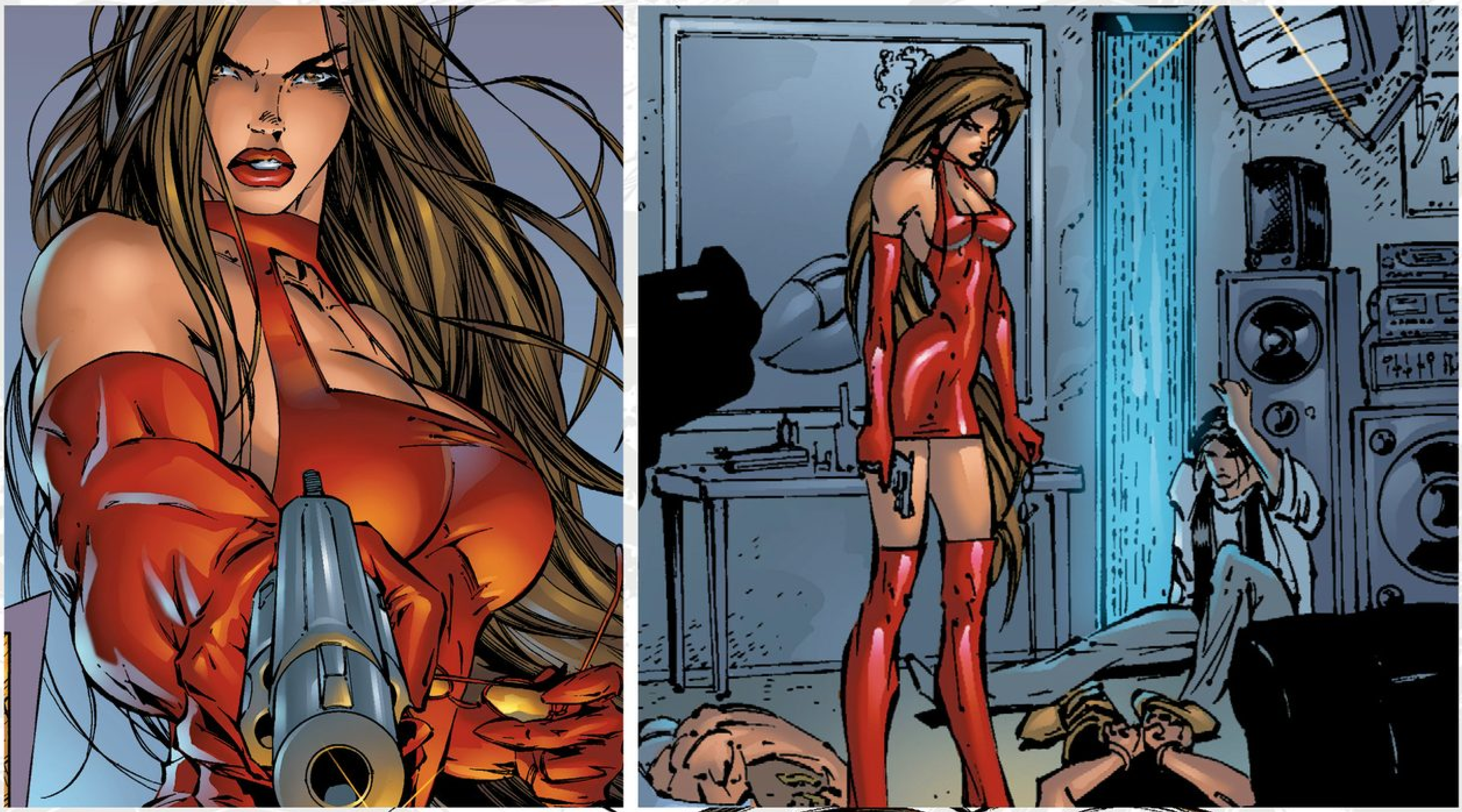

c2025
Black Armor era
Art by: **Giuseppe Cafaro** and **Arif Prianto**



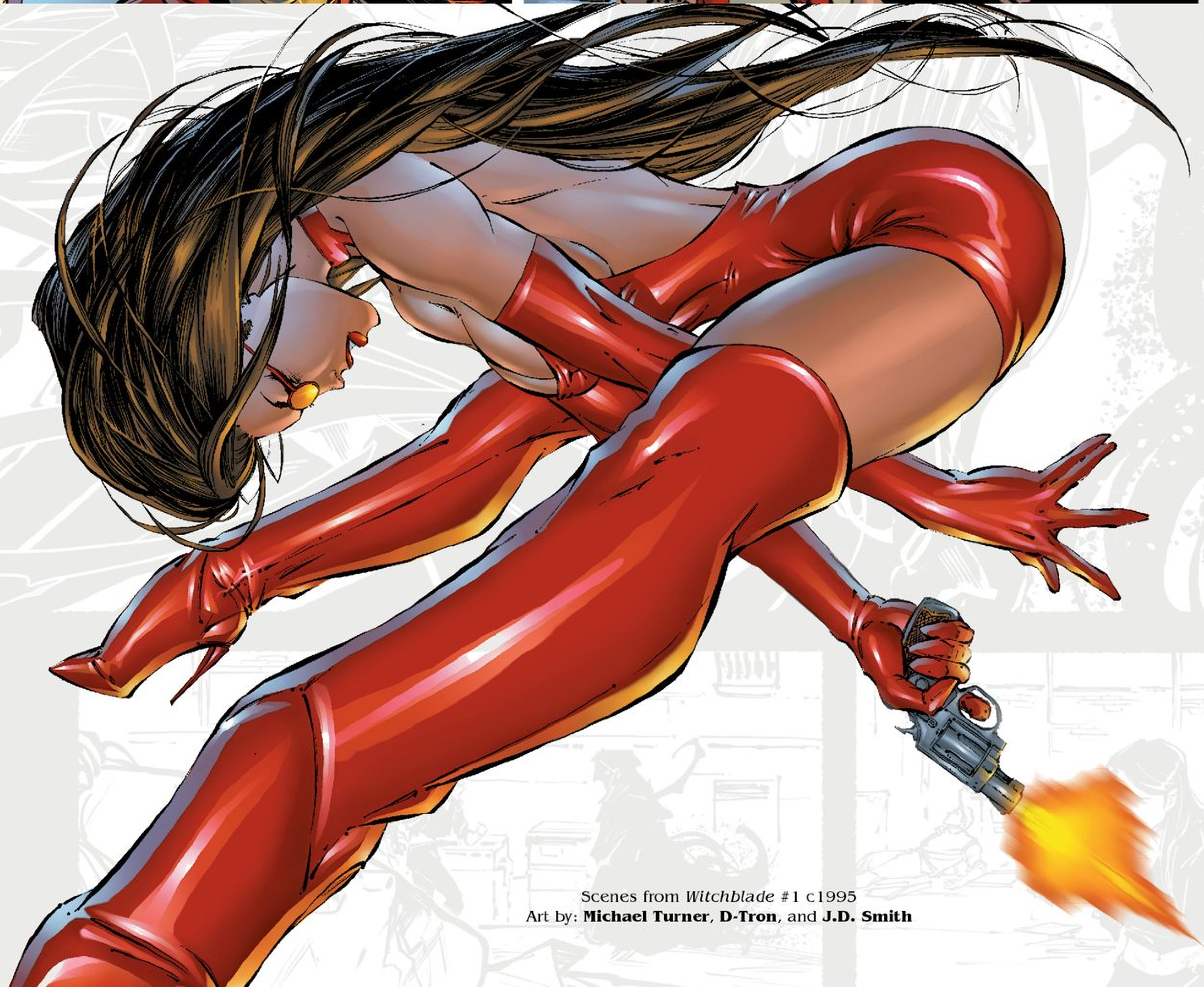
Witchblade #16, Cover B, D (Virgin) and Top Cow Store Spot Foil variant process and color final
Art by **Leirix**

Witchblade #16 Gallery • Cover C Process

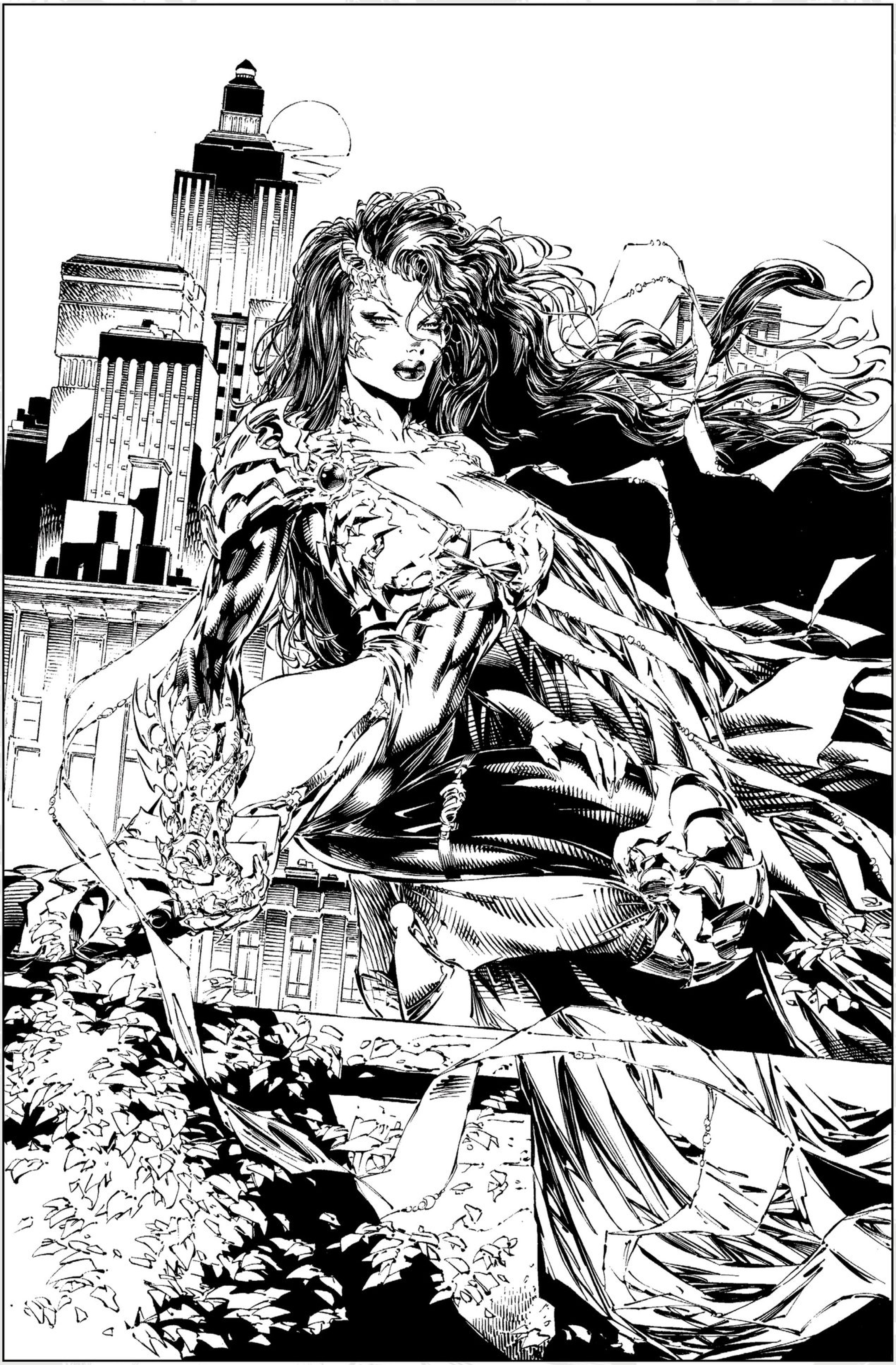
This month's variants take their inspiration from the rich legacy of *Witchblade*. Sozomaika's cover highlights moments from issue one and Sara's iconic red dress.



Scenes from *Witchblade* #1 c1995
Art by: **Michael Turner**, **D-Tron**, and **J.D. Smith**



Witchblade #16, Cover C, E (Virgin).
Facing page, color final. Art by **Sozomaika**



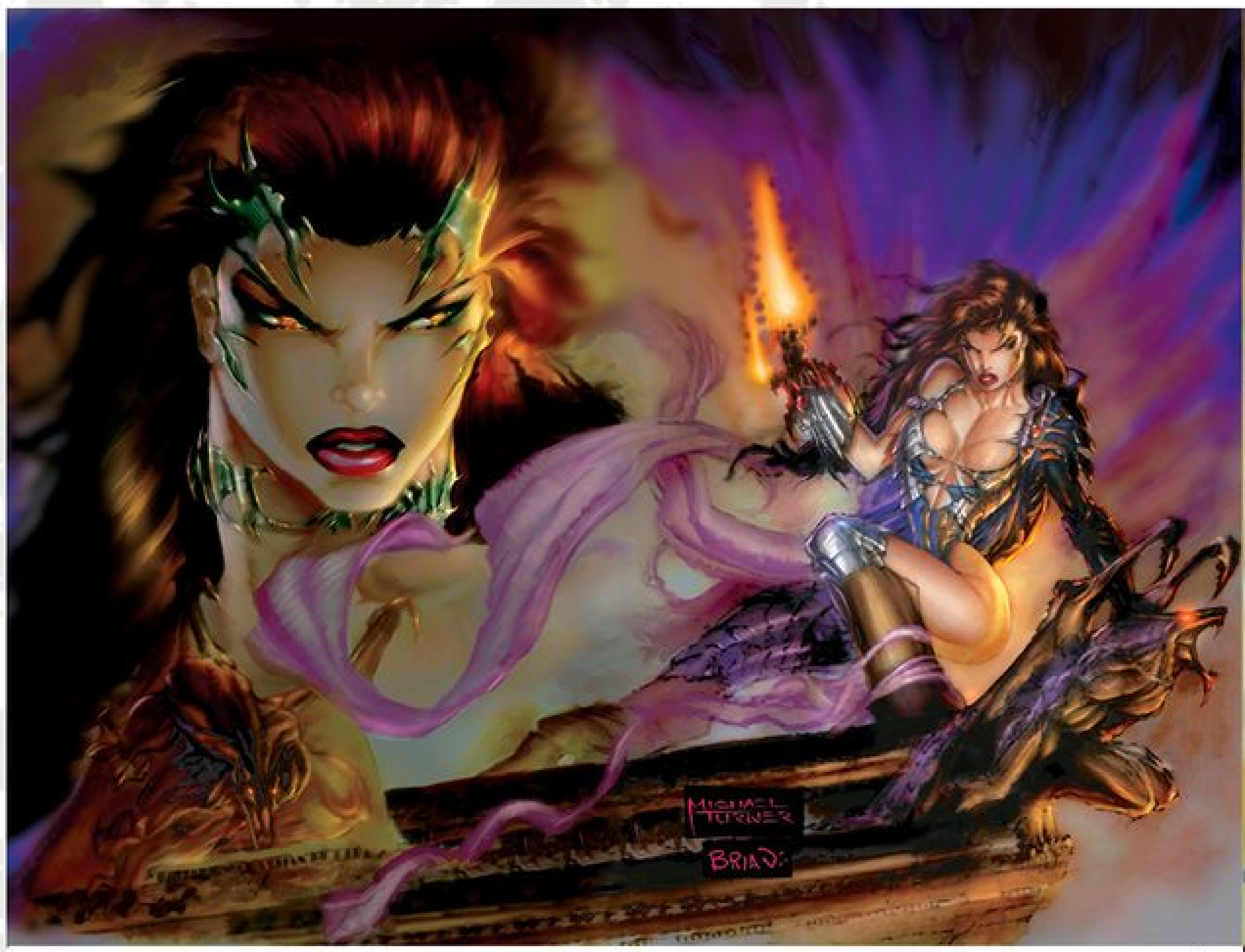
Above. Witchblade's first appearance in *Cyblade/Shi* issue #1,
line art by: **Marc Silvestri** and **Matt "Batt" Banning**

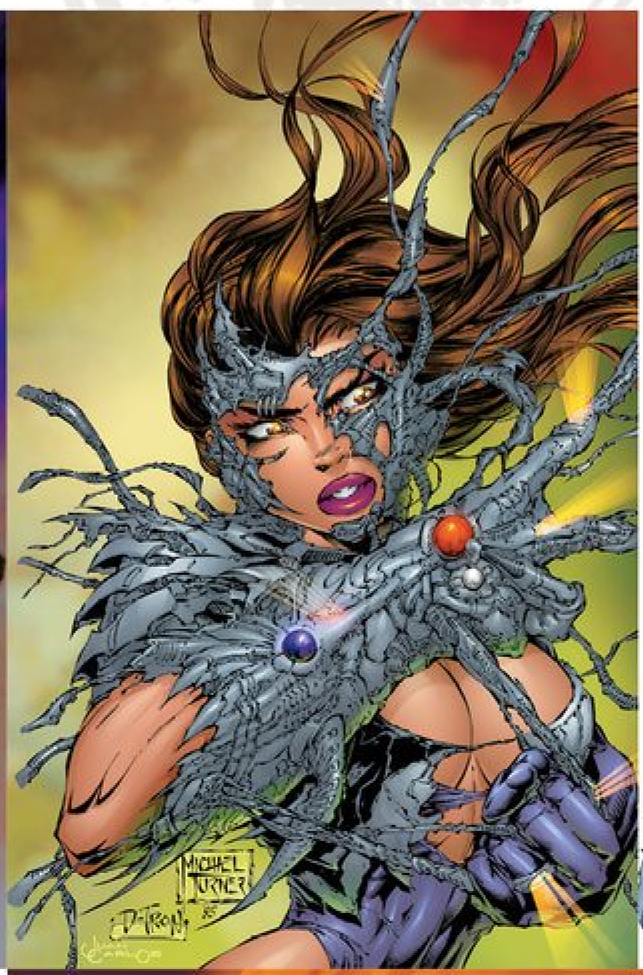
WITCHBLADE®

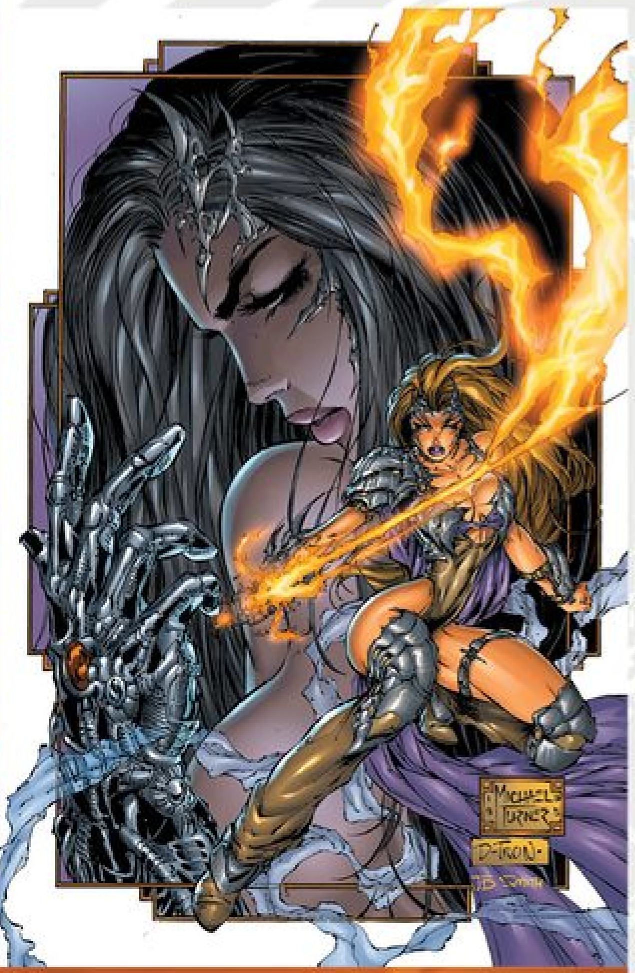
Art Gallery

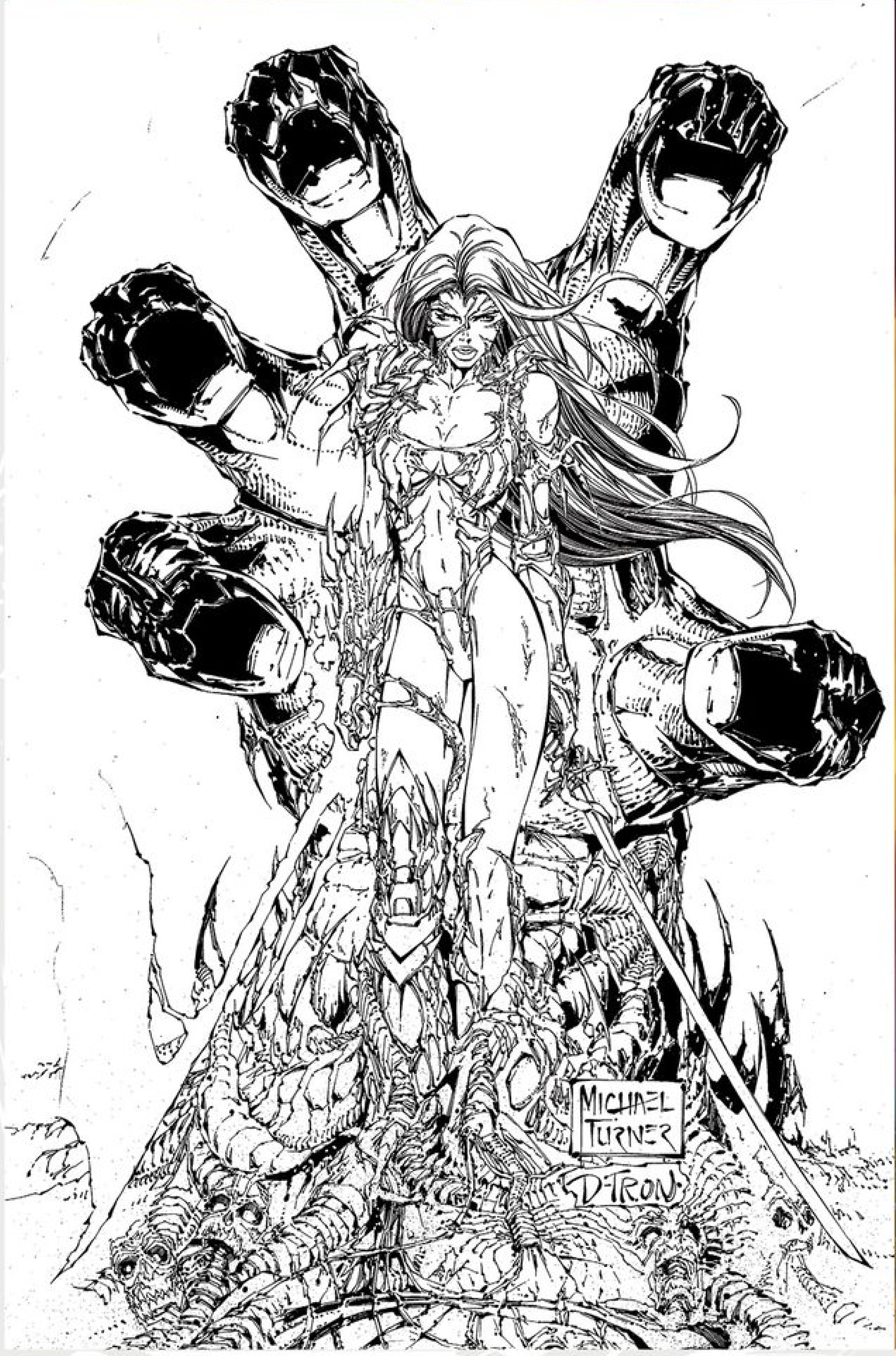
On the following pages, take a brief look at a selection of iconic covers and art pieces by legendary artist Michael Turner that set the stage for the enduring legacy of Witchblade!

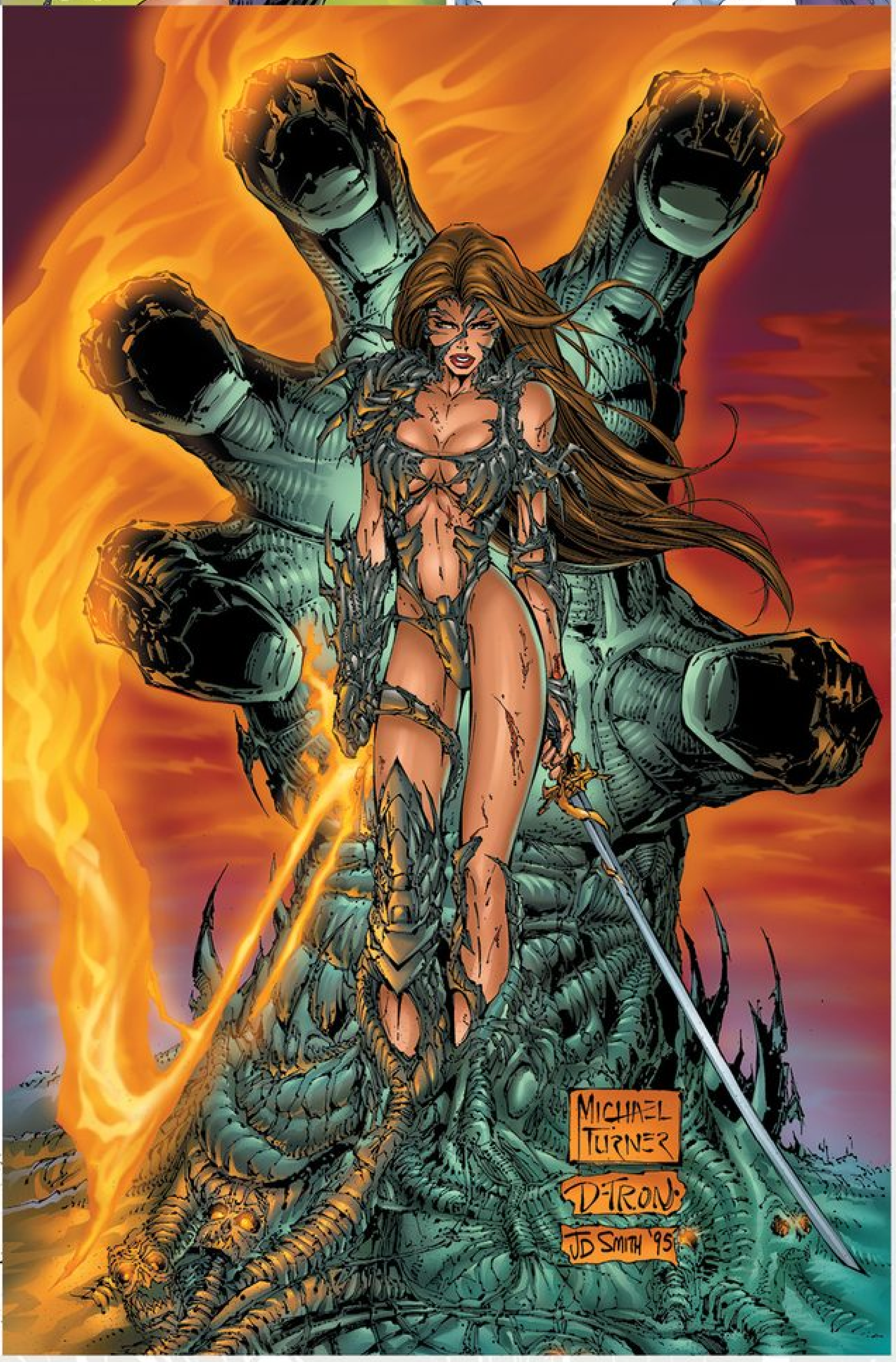
(Inks and Colors by: D-Tron, Brian Haberlin, Juan Carlos, J.D. Smith, and Peter Steigerwald)


MICHAEL TURNER
BRIAN





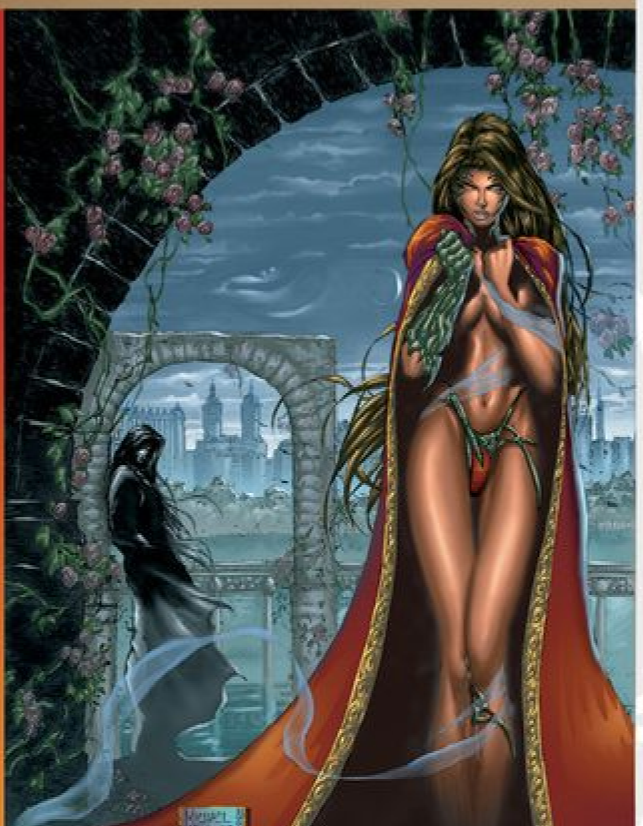

MICHAEL TURNER
D-TRON


MICHAEL TURNER
D-TRON
JD SMITH '95

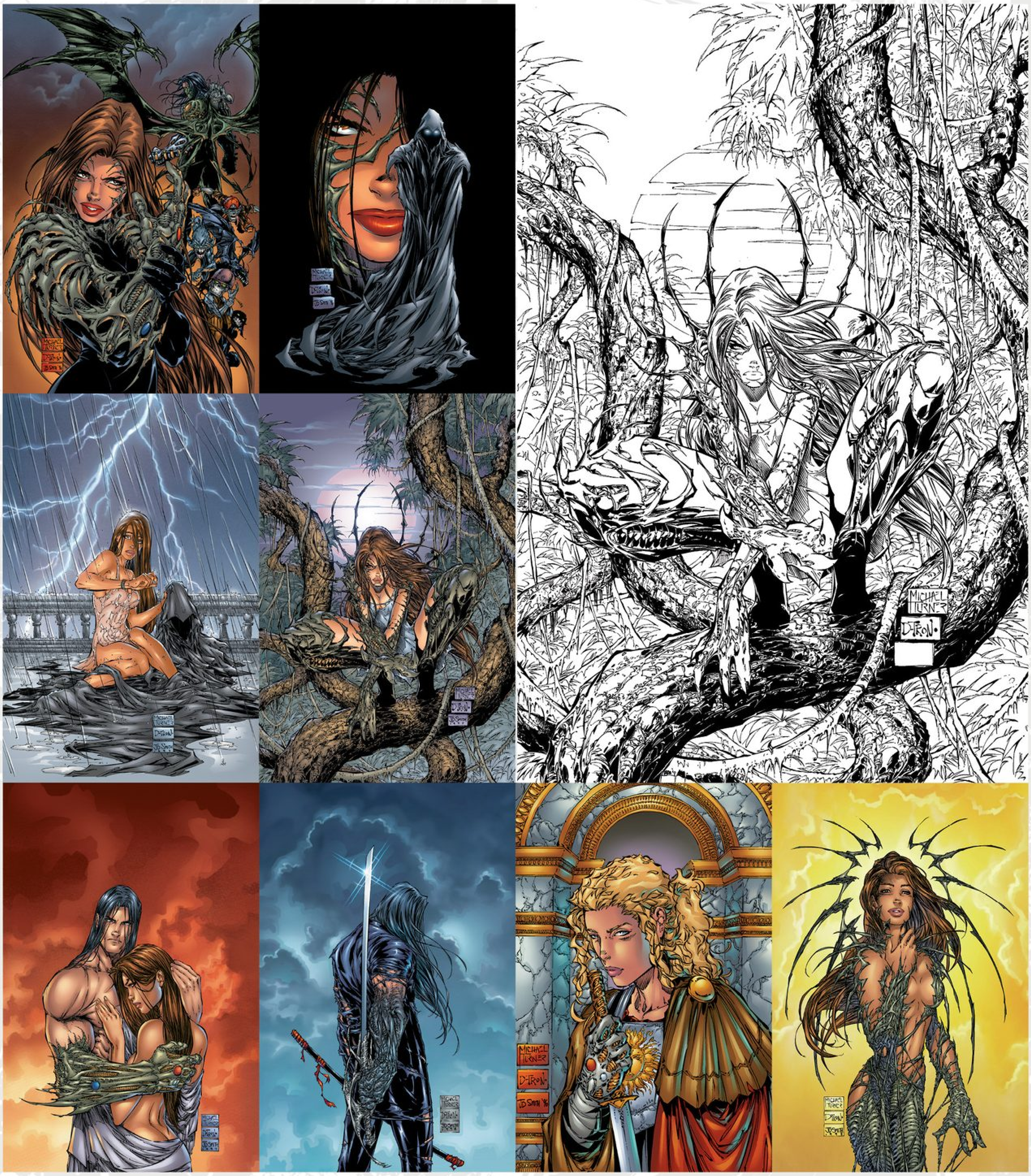
Art Gallery

MICHAEL TURNER
D-TRON '95
JB SMITH '95

MICHAEL TURNER
D-TRON



Art Gallery



Thank you to all the writers, artists, staff, and partners who have been a part of the *Witchblade* legacy. We look forward to the next thirty years and beyond!

Dedicated to

MICHAEL TURNER

Creative Team

Marguerite Bennett is a GLAAD-nominated, *New York Times*-bestselling comic book writer based in Los Angeles.

Her credits include DC Comics' *Bombshells, Batwoman* and *RWBY*, along with *Animosity*, *Horde*, and *Insexts* through Aftershock Comics, and *MOTHER OF MADNESS* with *Game of Thrones* superstar Emilia Clarke for Image Comics. She has written *Mighty Morphin Power Ranger*s for Boom Studios, *Josie and the Pussycats* through Archie, *A-Force* and *Years of Future Past* at Marvel, *Red Sonja* and *Sheena* from Dynamite, and the indie horror darling *The Lot* for Bad Idea.

She is the lead writer of *Ark: The Animated Serie*s from Studio Wildcard.

Giuseppe Cafaro is an Italian artist who is based in Caserta, Italy. He started his professional career with the Italian publisher GGStudio, and right after, in 2012, he started to work for Aspen Comics on books like *Soulfire, Fathom: Kiani* and *Trish out of Water*, and Zenescope Entertainment as a cover artist for several years.

He worked over the last 10 years with other publishers, like DC Comics, on *Suicide Squad* and *Catwoman*, and Dynamite Entertainment, on *Red Sonja* and *Vampirella*. He also worked on graphic novels for Boom Studios based on the *Power Rangers* franchise.

In 2021, he collaborated with Tim Seeley and Steve Orlando on *LOADED BIBLE* for Image Comics. Also, he worked on some short stories for Heavy Metal with Blake Northcott and with Phil Smith for the book *Brik Jones: Attorney for Earth*, for his publisher Fighting Lion Comics.

Arif Prianto followed his dreams of working in comics and began his career as a professional colorist in 2007. Since then he has worked on titles from Top Cow Productions, Inc on *WITCHBLADE, THE DARKNESS*, for DC on *Batman & The Joker, Dark Knights of Steel,* and for Marvel on *Venom* and *Spider Woman*. He says that coloring comics is "the best job ever!"

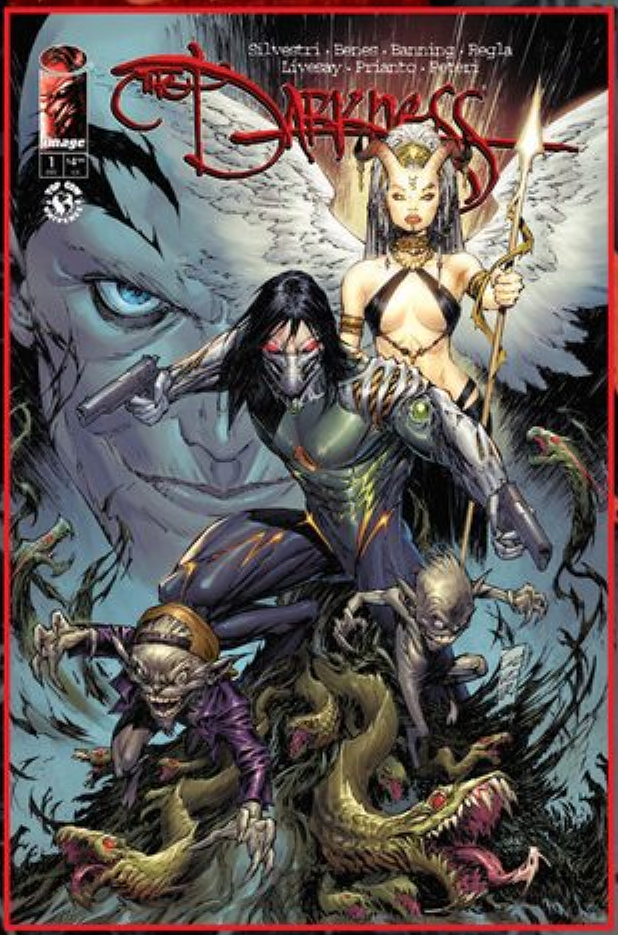
Troy Peteri has been lettering comics for over 20 years and has worked for most publishers you've heard of, and plenty you haven't. He's lettered everything from *The Avengers, Iron Man, Wolverine,* and *Amazing Spider-Man* to more recent titles such as *WITCHBLADE*, *Shazam*, and his all-time favorite gig, *Batman & Joker: The Deadly Duo*.

In a world consumed by shadows...

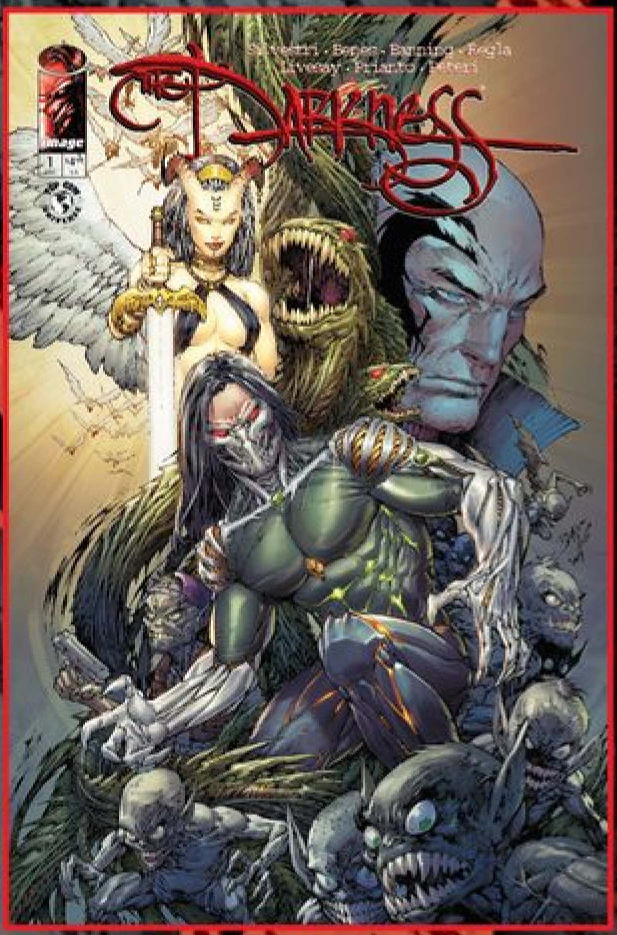
one man becomes

THE DARKNESS®

December Cover Checklist


Silvestri · Benes · Banning · Regla
Livesay · Prianto · Peteri
The Darkness
1

Cover A, art by
Marc Silvestri and **Arif Prianto**
Lunar Order Code 1025IM0237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Livesay · Prianto · Peteri
The Darkness
1

Cover B, art by
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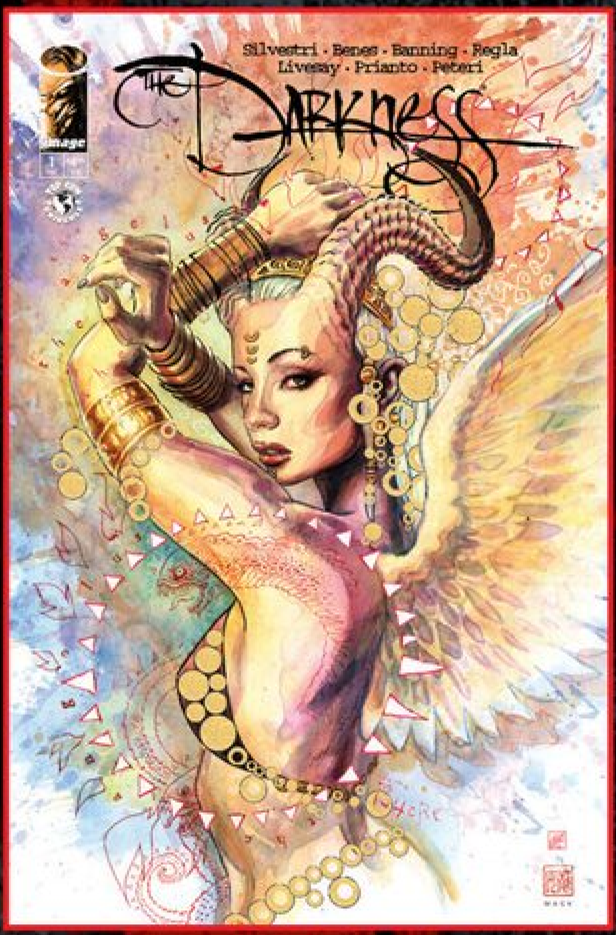
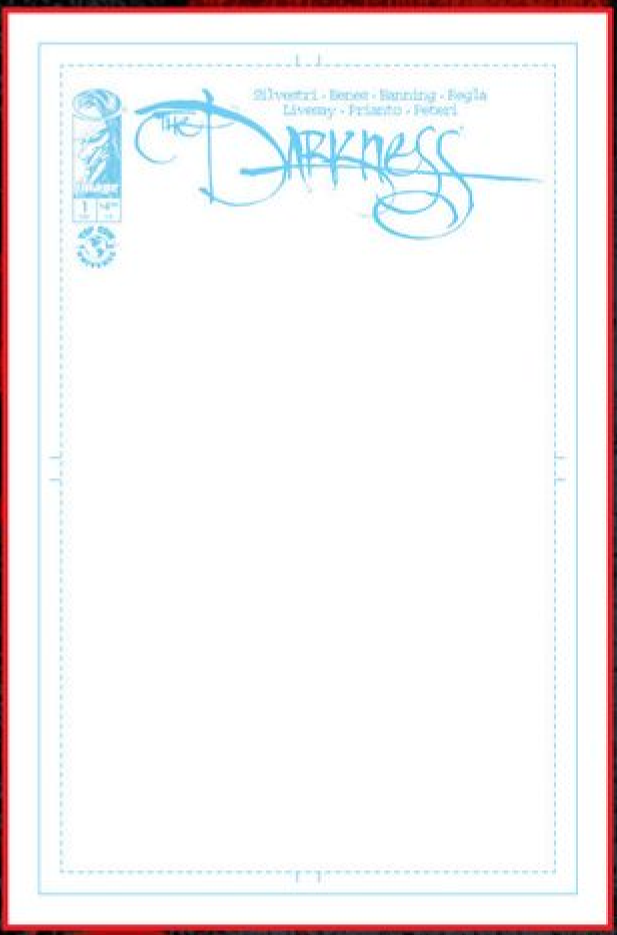

Silvestri · Benes · Banning · Regla
Livesay · Prianto · Peteri
The Darkness
1

Cover C, art by
David Mack
Lunar Order Code 1025IM0239


Silvestri · Benes · Banning · Regla
Livesay · Prianto · Peteri
The Darkness
1

Cover D, Blank Sketch cover
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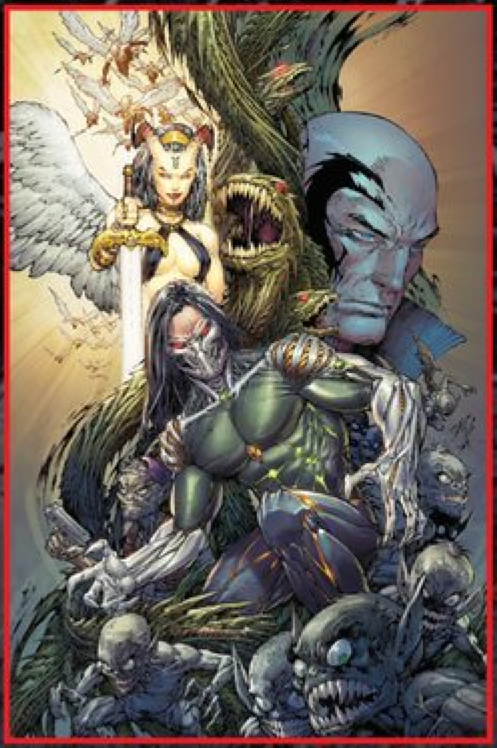
Lunar Order Code 1025IM0240



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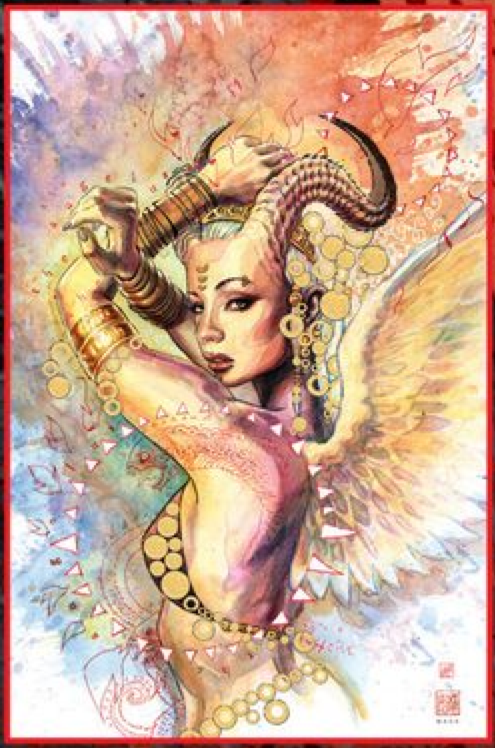

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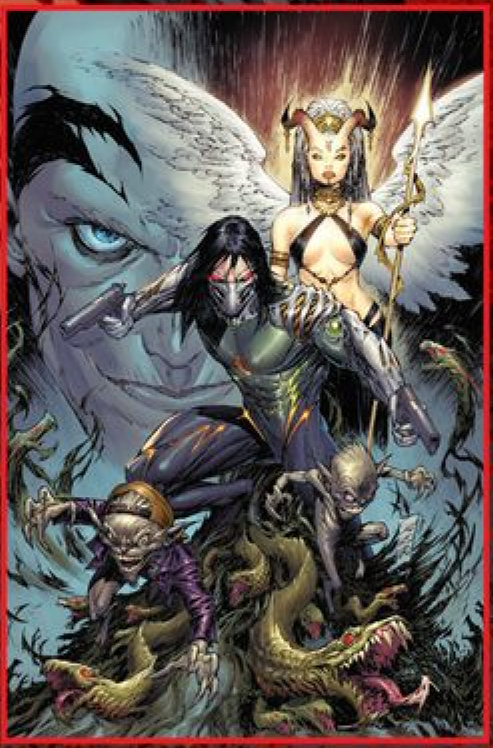

Cover G, 1:50 Virgin/Color, art by
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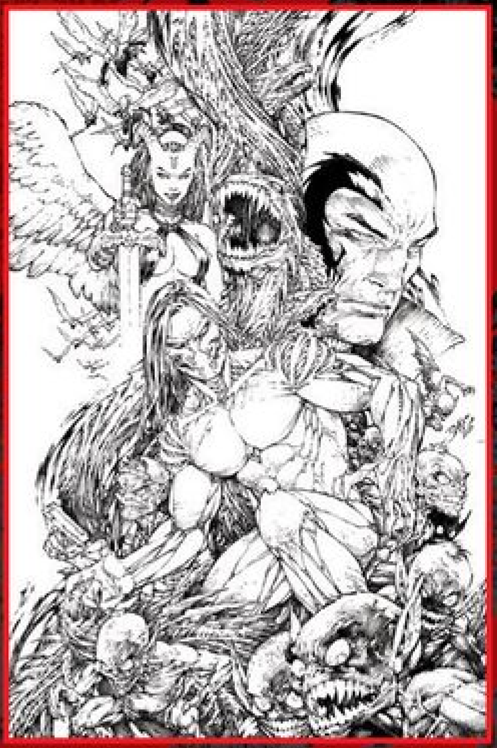
Lunar Order Code 1025IM0243



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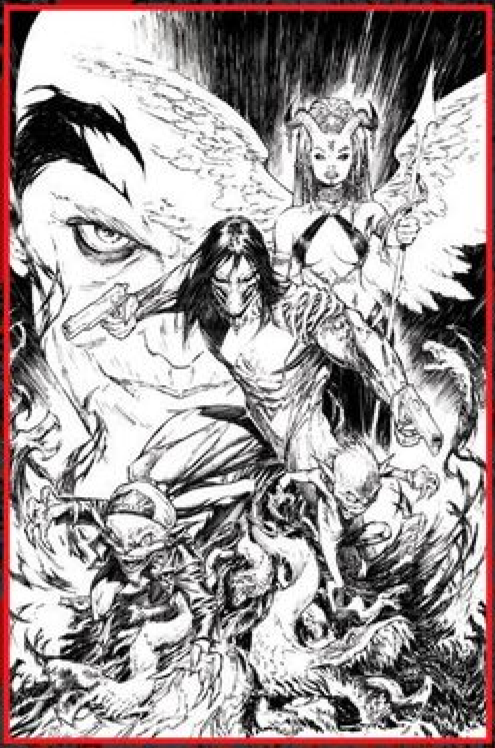

Cover I, 1:250 Virgin/B&W, art by
Marc Silvestri
Lunar Order Code 1025IM0245

- Cover J, 1:500 **Marc Silvestri** Signed Virgin/B&W variant. Retailers who order 500 copies or more of Cover A, B, C or D in any combination are eligible to order an additional copy of THE DARKNESS (2025) #1 CVR I INC 1:250 Virgin/B&W variant signed by cover artist **Marc Silvestri.**
Lunar Order Code 1025IM0246

- Cover K, 1:1000 **Marc Silvestri** Original art sketch cover variant (limit one per store). Retailers who order 1,000 copies or more of Cover A, B, C or D in any combination are eligible to order an original piece of art drawn on a blank variant cover D by **Marc Silvestri.**
Lunar Order Code 1025IM0247

Join Top Cow and Image Comics for the return of *The Darkness* this winter!

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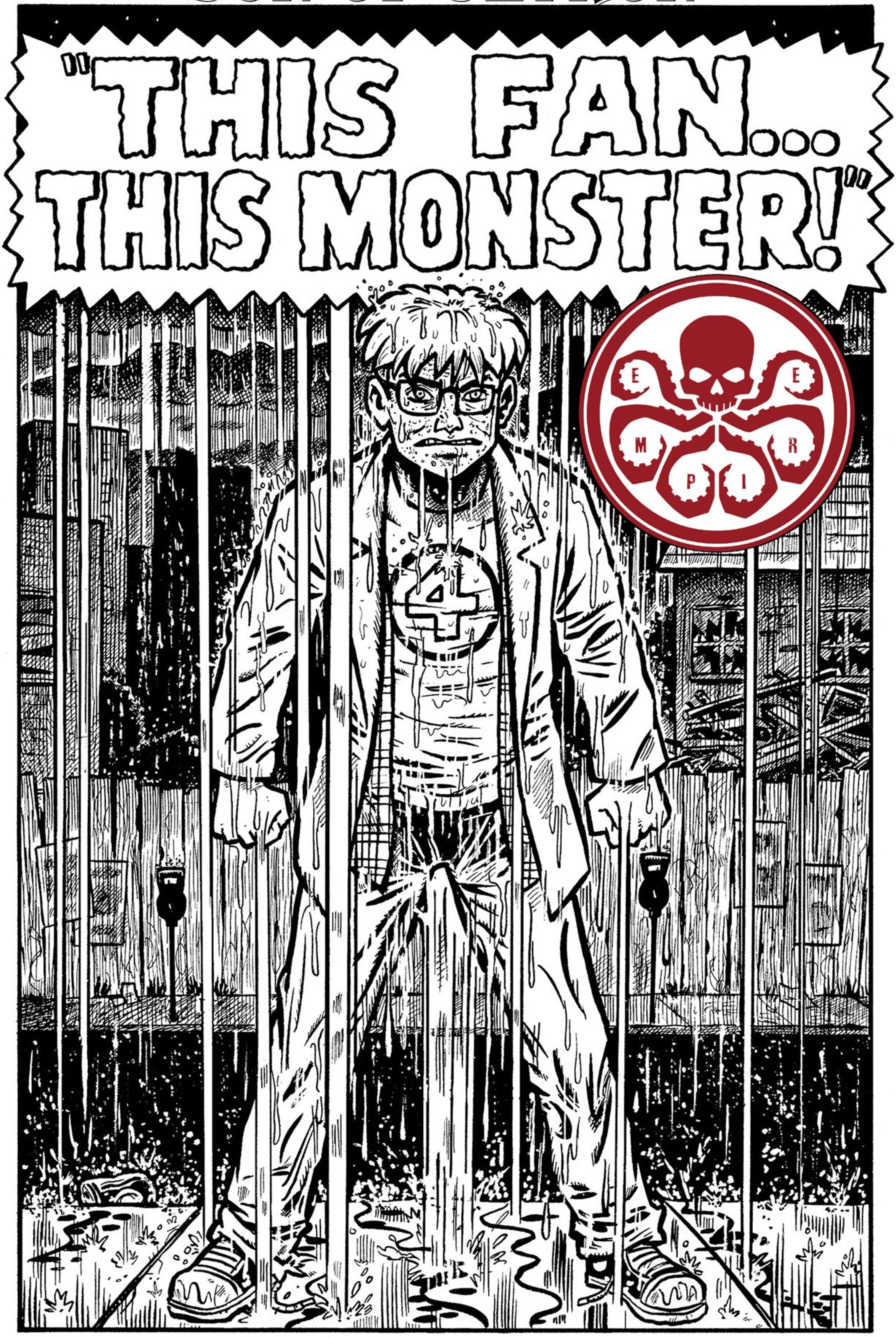
COVER A ART BY **GIUSEPPE CAFARO** AND **ARIF PRIANTO**
TOPCOW.COM | IMAGECOMICS.COM | RATED T + / TEEN PLUS

SON OF ULTRON


"THIS FAN... THIS MONSTER!"
4